University of Alberta

Perceptions of the Meanings of the Spanish Diminutive –ita/-ito in Learners of Spanish as a Second Language

by

Vanessa Ávila Vargas

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Perceptions of the meanings of the Spanish diminutive *–ita/-ito* by learners of Spanish as a Second Language.

Abstract

Second language learners of Spanish face the difficulty of ascribing meaning to the highly polysemous suffix *–ita/-ito*. In this study, 224 learners of Spanish as a second language, representing 9 different levels, were compared to 38 native speakers of Spanish. Three research questions were investigated: the meanings that L2 learners associate with the Spanish diminutive, whether if as proficiency levels increase, L2 learners would show more native-like polysemy in their selection of meanings, and whether as proficiency levels increase L2 learners would be more accurate in their interpretation of the diminutive when selecting senses. Written tests and oral interviews were used to gather the information on the perceptions of the meanings of the diminutive. It was found that proficiency played a role in the accurate perception of diminutive meanings. Most groups showed native-like responses as the level of proficiency increased. However unexpected results were found for the lowest and highest levels, possibly due to transfer. The early awareness of similar chains of associations in L1 and L2 can preserve already existing peripheral meanings in the L1 inventory of associations.

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Chapter 1

Previous research

1.1 Presentation of the problem

The Spanish diminutive *–ita/-ito* shows great productivity in written and oral Spanish; such productivity is reflected by its high degree of polysemy. Several connotations or meanings,[1] namely [affection], [smallness], diminution of value ([DOV]), [respect], [augmentation in size], [lack of importance], [apologetic], [pity], among many others, appear to be in the repertoire of meanings of native speakers (NS). The perception of the diminutive meaning among NS varies according to several factors, including the context and the origin of the NS. Thus, ascribing native-like meaning to the *–ita/-ito* suffix presents difficulty for second language (L2) learners. This study investigates what meanings and how many meanings L2 learners ascribe to the Spanish diminutive *–ita/-ito.*

The uses of the diminutive in Spanish show a great connotation range among NS. Primarily, the diminutive affix signifies a conceptual entity of size. In addition to the notion of smallness, there is a criterion of values in different meanings that co-exist with the concept of size. 'Smallness' is the denotative meaning of the affix in languages that use the diminutive. The different values that Spanish speakers posit in the *–ita/-ito* suffix depend highly on the context that triggers the several extensions. The frequency in use of these diminutive suffixes changes according to the region and the context. The meaning extensions are sometimes clearly and sometimes not so clearly related to the central meaning of smallness. The inventory of related extensions of the diminutive that an

[1] Connotation refers to the non central meaning acquired through frequent associations (Trask, 1985, p.51), contrastive to denotation, which refers to the central meaning of a linguistic form (ibid, p.69).

English NS has might not correspond to the inventory of meanings that a NS of Spanish has. The diminutive can also be used multiply, applying more than one suffix to the bare form, i.e. *chiquitinzuela* ('small'+ ita + in + zuela). The orthographic rules are not hard and fast as to which suffix is used; the tendency is that words ending in *-a, -o* or *-te* form the diminutive by dropping the final vowel and adding *-ito* or *-ita*, while *-cito* or *-ecito* is added to other words. The diminutive suffixes tend to be a spoken phenomenon of Spanish more than a written one, and they are more common in some areas than others. In general, they are used more than the English morphological diminutive *-y* or *-ie* of words such as 'puppy' or 'cutie', as well as the lexical diminutive 'little'. This work deals with the meanings of the diminutive that L2 speakers of Spanish possess as part of their inventory of meaning.

This chapter will begin with a review of the literature and will present the relevant work for this thesis. One subsection will deal with the acquisition of polysemous items and another one with the interpretation of polysemous items in a second language (L2). The following sections will present a description of the meanings of the diminutive that were used in this study, where two main typologies will be presented. After the presentation of the meanings found for the Spanish diminutive; the meanings chosen for this study will be provided. Finally this chapter will describe the hypotheses of the thesis which will be evaluated further on in chapter three.

1.2 Review of literature

The research on the acquisition of lexical meaning of Spanish affixes by L2 learners of Spanish is not extensive. There has been no literature found on the acquisition of the Spanish diminutive affix *–ita/-ito*. Thus, the Spanish diminutive affixes have not

been studied in terms of the stages and factors involved in the acquisition of them in a L2. The research on the acquisition of morphology and semantics has mostly been carried out on data from learners of languages other than Spanish.

The literature reviewed in this section focuses on issues related to the following two relevant points to this study: the acquisition of a polysemous item in L2 and the interpretation of a polysemous item in L2.

1.2.1 Acquisition of a polysemous item

Previous studies have shown that the meanings of polysemous items are not acquired simultaneously in L2. Therefore it is expected that some meanings of the diminutive would be acquired before others. The studies reviewed look at proficiency as one of the factors involved in predicting the order of meaning acquisition. This section summarizes six empirical studies (Van Patten, 1985, 1987; Ryan & Lafford, 1992; Guntermann, 1992a, 1992b; Lafford and Ryan, 1995) that dealt with the stages of acquisition for polysemous lexical items.

VanPatten (1985) investigates the developmental stages that adult L2 learners go through when learning the Spanish copular verbs *ser* and *estar*. Six adult learners in a first-year university-level classroom participated in a longitudinal study where they were interviewed every two weeks for ½ hour. The focus of the oral interviews was on communication and not on form; the tasks consisted of conversation and picture description /story telling. He postulated four developmental processes that accounted for these stages of acquisition: 1) communicative value, 2) frequency of occurrence in input, 3) simplification and 4) transfer. Two years after, in a later reassessment of the 1985 study, VanPatten (1987) posited five stages:

1. absence of the copula
2. use of only *ser* where either only *ser* or *estar* was required
3. use of *estar* with the present progressive
4. use of *estar* for location
5. use of *estar* for conditions

Ryan and Lafford (1992) assessed the universality of VanPatten's findings by examining the stages of *ser* and *estar* in sixteen students of an intensive beginners' level studying Spanish in Spain. Three oral interviews of 15-30 minutes in length were conducted over a period of four and a half months. The interviews were semi-structured conversations between the researchers and the students about topics related with their stay in Granada, where she elicited responses that would require the participants to answer according to their proficiency level. Contrary to VanPatten's findings, they found *estar* to be acquired in conditional contexts before locative contexts. Furthermore, they observed a consistent use of zero copula in conditional contexts instead of the required use of *estar*. Ryan and Lafford proposed a relationship of markedness between the Conditional and the Locative uses under 'preferred errors' for obligatory *estar*. It was shown consistently throughout the study that the lack of copula was the preferred error that students made when the conditional use of *estar* was required. The use of this copula was also considered to be more marked even though it was acquired first, since it showed to be more problematic than the rest of the uses. Overall the study agreed with Van Patten's findings where *ser* is used more accurately. This study found *estar* continuously replaced by the zero copula in conditional contexts.

Another study on the stages of acquisition of *ser* and *estar* was done by Guntermann (1992 a), where she examined the conversational data of nine participants while volunteering in Central America and a year after volunteering. Twenty oral examinations were administered by certified interviewers who evaluated their proficiency in Spanish. Besides the questions on effects of instruction that these studies always raise, this study provided additional information on communication strategies that affect the acquisition of the copulas. Her findings were partially consistent with Van Patten's and Lafford's; nonetheless, she added the late acquisition of the *ser* passive construction and discussed formulaic impersonal expressions in third person. The usage of these expressions was seen as strategies to simplify the language, to use the fewest forms and rules to express the most meaning. Guntermann's study views the simplification strategies as positive and not reductive because speakers expand their ability to use language to a comfortable point.

Studies on the acquisition of lexical meaning in Spanish have looked at the acquisition of the prepositions *por* and *para* as well. Data from Guntermann (1992b) and Ryan & Lafford (1995) had several findings in common, Guntermann's paper describes the use of *por* and *para* of nine participants living in Central America. Tape-recorded interviews were administered during and after the stay, after 300 hours of instruction in the Latin American country. The study found that some functions were acquired before others. Guntermann uses the Naïve Lexical Hypothesis to explain students' equation of the first language's (L1) *for* with L2's *por*, where every L1 word has an L2 equivalent. She also suggests that *para* falls into Van Patten's communicative value hypothesis, which proposes that *para* is more fundamental for communicating than *por*.

Ryan and Lafford (1995) study nine English speaking students from Arizona State University who were studying Spanish in Granada for three hours a day. The interviews were tape-recorded three times: before going to Granada, during the stay and before leaving Granada. The interviews were transcribed according to Guntermann's system in order to compare both. This study goes into a deeper and further analysis as they investigated these prepositions' non-canonical uses; they broke down the substitution of the prepositions for each other and for conjunctions, the systematic variability in the use of *por* and *para* in time expressions, and the use of both prepositions as deictic markers of topicalization. They found a possible order of acquisition of the functions for the prepositions where the most non-canonical uses of these prepositions were substitutions for other prepositions. They also found inherent variability in the interlanguage system based on the temporal context of the prepositional phrase when choosing either *por* or *para* to express duration in time. The tentative orders of acquisition were based on the frequency of occurrence in the data, consistency of usage across levels and the level of proficiency in which the usages occur.

In sum, the few studies done on the acquisition of polysemous items in L2 Spanish have found that there are stages of acquisition for polysemous items, as well as that the different meanings are learnt in stages and as such are dependent on stages of competence.

1.2.2 Interpretation of a polysemous item in L2

Studies reviewed in this section deal with the interpretation of the meanings of a polysemous word in L2 and the influence L1 has on this interpretation. The issues of

transfer and centrality of meaning are relevant to our understanding of the meanings L2 learners ascribe to the diminutive in Spanish.

Ijaz (1986) investigated the lexical acquisition of L2 English prepositions. She compared the interpretation of English prepositions by advanced ESL learners to NSs' interpretation of the same words. She studied 149 non-native English speakers who in a sentence completion test and in a semantic relatedness test indicated how similar six prepositions were to each other. She examined the degree to which the meaning ascribed to words by L2 learners is identical to that of NS. Ijaz investigated linguistic and cognitive determinants of lexical acquisition in a L2 and the semantic boundaries that ESL learners ascribe to words. She hypothesized the following:

1. Advance learners would differ from adult NS in the semantic boundaries they ascribe to English words;
2. The meaning ascribed to typical or central members of semantic categories by ESL learners would correspond more closely to that of adult NS than the meaning ascribed to less typical members; and
3. The semantic boundaries ascribed to English words by advanced ESL learners were influenced by native language conceptual constraints.

Ijaz's investigation dealt with semantic boundaries, centrality and transfer. She explained the semantic boundaries distinction between NS and ESL learners in terms of the native-language transfer that ESL learners experience when ascribing meaning to English words. It was found that L2 speakers transfer the mapping patterns of L1 to L2 directly. Ijaz's hypothesis concerning the central members of semantic categories stems from the notion of centrality, which she considers evidence for the principle of

prototypicality underlying the structure of all languages. Therefore, the L2 preposition meanings that correspond more closely to prototypical L1 meanings would be acquired first.

The work of Levenston and Blum (cited in Ijaz) supports her hypothesis as well, in that they found that meaning ascribed to the central members of semantic categories by ESL learners corresponded more closely to that of adult NS than the meaning ascribed to less typical members. Levenston and Blum found that L2 learners used more words of general meaning than of specific meaning, leading to inappropriate generalizations and failure to respond to constraints of register and collocation. Ijaz found the following factors influencing the meanings that words have for L2 learners;

1. contextual constraints and number of constraints, weight and perspicuity of the relevant semantic dimensions.

2. differences in the weighting of those dimensions in the learner's L1 and the L2,

3. the effects of native-language transfer, and

4. cognitive factors related to the structure of semantic categories.

Conceptual patterns and linguistic coding practices in L1 set the criteria for those in L2 although it could be constrained by cognitive factors. Kellerman (1978) studied the intuitions of NS as a source of predictions about transferability. He used data from Dutch university students and school children who were asked to judged the acceptability of English expressions containing *break.* His paper investigates speakers' intuition about the polysemous Dutch verb *breken* and the equivalent verb used in English *to break.* Kellerman saw the rank order of acceptable expressions in English to be determined by the degree to which they represented the core meaning of *break;* therefore, idiomatic or

figurative meanings of L2 words were perceived to be highly marked by language learners. Image schemas[2] account for the *break* vs. *breken* similitude in meanings. His paper suggests that image schemas may help transferability. Similar to Ijaz's hypothesis, Kellerman claims that the prototypical usages will be easier to learn than the peripheral ones. However, there are other important factors when looking at transferability; usage familiarity and grammatical structure are other factors he considers as well.

Kroll & de Groot (1997) investigate several studies on L2 words accessing concepts via L1 words. They cover issues of bilingual language representation where the distinction is made between lexical representation and conceptual representation. Their research focuses on the issue of how word forms are mapped to meaning in two languages. The construction of the bilingual's mind is treated as a reflection of the level of proficiency in the L2 and the context where the language was acquired. The studies examine the cognitive processes of adult participants at early stages of L2 acquisition, fluent bilinguals and fluent bilinguals with some L3 acquisition. Translation tasks, picture naming and several types of semantic priming tests were used to obtain the data. They offer two mapping models: the word association model and the concept mediation model. The first model links the L2 word concepts through the word translation equivalents in L1 and in the latter model each language accesses the same shared concepts directly. The studies presented by Kroll and De Groot show a shift from lexical to conceptual mappings for L2 words depending on the fluency of the speakers. Data show that more

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[2] An image schema is a mental pattern that recurrently provides structured understanding of various experiences, and is available for use in metaphor as a source domain to provide an understanding of yet other experiences. (Johnson, 1987)

proficient learners directly link the L2 words with concepts and less proficient learners use the L1 mapping between form and concept.

The overall look at the studies reviewed by Kroll and De Groot support the claim that the nature of conceptual processing changes with increasing L2 proficiency. They also suggest that there are changes in bilingual representation and/or processing with increasing expertise that can simultaneously exist within the same individual. They also presented a conceptual feature model as an alternative approach to focus on aspects of words that appear to be associated with lexical and conceptual processing. This model supports the idea of concrete words and cognates being translated faster than abstract words and noncognates. Because concrete words refer to perceptual referents shared across languages, they access similar or identical subsets of conceptual features, regardless of the language in which they are presented.

The results from the studies reviewed here identify several factors that influence the interpretation of a polysemous item. Centrality plays a big role when interpreting a polysemous item as central meanings have been preferred over peripheral meanings. The notion of transferability is also a determinant in the interpretation of a polysemous item given that both L1 and L2 share the concepts in question. Finally proficiency showed in these studies to be correlated with centrality and with the type of conceptual mapping (direct or through L1) that participants present.

1.3 Description of meanings of the diminutive

The meanings of the diminutive across languages have been studied in detail by Taylor (1995) and Gooch (1967). Both researchers agree that the central meaning expressed by the diminutive is smallness. Where there has been less agreement is in the

range of non-central meaning expressed by the diminutive. The typological work of these studies establish the basis of the image schema of the diminutive conceptualization that will be discussed throughout this work.

1.3.1 Taylor (1995)

In the work on polysemous categories in morphology and syntax that Taylor (1995) presented in his book on linguistic categorization, he does not posit a dichotomy opposing the view of a "common core"[3] against the view of "family resemblance". A "common core" concept captures a well defined common property that explicates the relation of one concept to other concepts (Lakoff, 1987). The concept of "family resemblance" categorizes members of the family with no need of a single property shared but instead the resemblance is shared in various ways (Lakoff, 1987). Taylor talks about the complementing aspect of these two views, where the recognition of the core meaning does not imply inconsistency with the family resemblance approach; rather, it constitutes a possible structuring in a family resemblance (Taylor, 1995). His study is based on the two notions of 'core meaning' and 'family resemblance' categories, where Taylor suggests a family resemblance approach to the polysemous diminutive suffix. Taylor's work on the diminutive aims at illustrating polysemous categories in language structures other than the ones found in lexical items, such as syntactic, morphosyntactic, morphological and prosodic polysemic phenomena. Taylor presents as part of the morphological polysemous categories the diminutive suffixation, where he presents the

[3] 'Core meaning' will be used interchangeably with 'central meanings', which represent the meanings that are found to be the essential connotations. In this case [affection] and [smallness] will represent the two main meanings of the diminutive.

work done by Jakobson on the Russian case. Taylor presents crosslinguistic agreement on the different meanings assigned to the diminutive.

He shows the diminutive morphemes not only as polysemous across languages but also as constantly sharing the same different meanings that the diminutive conveys. His work compiles the most productive diminutive morphemes, where he focuses on the Italian, Russian and Spanish diminutives as the ones showing the most extensive repertoire of meanings. He does not show research on semantic variation among diminutive affixes in the same language, as many languages such as Spanish presents more than one diminutive affix form. [4] Taylor focuses on the centrality of the category as the expression of smallness in the size of a physical entity. Departing from the notion of small size, he proceeds by extending this notion outside the spatial realm of physical entities to non-spatial domains. Metaphorization is Taylor's explanation for the process whereby physical smallness is transferred to the expression of several meanings related to diminution in a more abstract way.

Taylor then describes the various meanings found in the three languages previously mentioned. According to him short temporal duration, reduced strength and reduced scale of an entity are expressed by the diminutive when applied to nouns. When applied to adjectives and adverbs, the diminutive can express reduced extent of intensity and when applied to verbs, it can be used to designate a process of intermittent events or poor quality events. Taylor points out the clear family resemblance that is seen throughout these connotations, where the meaning attribute perceived has the notion of [smallness] in some dimension. A meaning not related to the notion of smallness has

[4] *-ita/o, -eta/ete, -illa/illo, -cilla/-cillo, -ecilla/-ecilla, -ica/ico, -cica/-cico, -ecica/-ecico, -uela/uelo, -ezuela/-ezuelo, -zuela/-zuela, -ichuela/-ichuelo, -achuela/-achuelo, -ecezuela/-ecezuelo,-ina/in, -iña/iño, -aja/ajo)* (Beinhauer, 1896).

consistently appeared as productive as the expression of [smallness]. [Affection] is shown as a strong possible alternative core meaning. Taylor describes it as an 'attitude of affection or tenderness on the part of the speaker'. [Affection] is not restricted to nouns denoting animate creatures but rather it can be part of the speaker's attitude of affection towards the referred item. In this way, he explains the expression of affection as the diminutivization of inanimate items, i.e. (Italian) *casella* <*casa* 'house' 'small house' or 'nice little house', where the latter translation with the affective meaning does not necessarily connote smallness. Metonymic transfer is Taylor's explanation for the extension of the diminutive to express [affection].

> Human beings have a natural suspicion of large creatures; small animals and small children on the other hand can be cuddled and caressed without embarrassment or fear. The association of smallness with affection is thus grounded in the co-occurrence of elements within an experiential frame. (p. 146).

Taylor takes the idea of the experiential frame to explain the negative feelings that the diminutive connotes as well; in this way the attitude of [depreciation] is explained under the same basis that the [affective] meaning. Thus, Taylor sees the correlation between decreased size and diminished worth as superior worth is correlated with increased size. He calls the 'dismissive' meaning of the diminutive when the diminutive is used to mean that things are of little importance or a matter of no significance. From these meanings, Taylor continues to link further meanings into a family of related meanings, where he adds to the list the [approximative] usage, restricted to expressions of quantity. Taylor links this meaning with the [lack of importance] meanings mentioned

previously. He explains that the exact value of the quantity conveyed is not important but instead an approximation to the quantity is addressed; consequently he explains this [approximative] meaning as an excuse for not being precise and 'covers [the speaker] against possible reproaches' (p.146). This meaning is also called an [apologetic] meaning by Gooch (1967). Taylor introduces next the [intensifying] meaning which he considers not as productive as the rest of the meanings. Nonetheless the metonymic extension of the central meaning of smallness in size is again present. He quotes Wierzbicka's (1980) Spanish example of the [intensifying] meaning where she pointed out the 'intensification' of meaning that the Spanish word with the suffix in *Son igualitos* 'They are the same + diminutive affix' conveys. Here the diminutive expresses [perfect identity] which surpasses the original meaning of [sameness] that the adjective has without the affix.

Taylor offered a comprehensive analysis of the variety of meanings that the diminutive expresses in Spanish and Italian. His case for polysemy in morphology is achieved with the description of a family resemblance that is juxtaposed with a core meaning approach that works as the basis of the family resemblance categories.

1.3.2 Gooch (1967)

Gooch arranges into categories the augmentative, diminutive and pejorative Spanish suffixes. He provides a guide to their use and meaning where the main object of his book is the formulation of general guiding principles in relation to all the affixes. Gooch considers it essential to bear in mind the context and particular circumstances of each case as the final arbiter.

He talks about the suffixes in small sections where he briefly describes the diminutive under different scopes. In the first section he talks about the importance of the

diminutive and the special attention the diminutive merits as revealing of NS and writers' attitudes to the concepts expressed by the words containing the diminutive. In the second section "Expression of emotion", he explains how by means of the diminutive it is possible to express graphically extremes of feeling without using detached expressions that take away warmth. He presents the idea that often [affection] is the primary the meaning conveyed and not [smallness]. In this section Gooch explains how Spanish children automatically apply diminutive affixes to small and attractive persons and things; thus, by extension they and adults often apply them where there is no question of smallness but instead to reduce something to proportions which are for them emotionally manageable. There is a fear for what is big and a concomitant desire to reduce them to friendly proportions via the diminutive. He introduces in this section renowned writers who had used the diminutive as a literary device for expression. In the third section "Stress, ambivalence and individuality", Gooch deals with the purpose of the diminutive to focus on a specific image. Here Gooch presents Amado Alonso's quotes where the idea of the diminutive is one of making salient the representation of an object. The idea of the accompanied context stands as crucial to determine the precise interpretation of the diminutive. The diminutive not only underlines a word but it can imply augmentation which works ironically with strong pejorative implications. In the final section "Popular and formal language", Gooch deals with the idea that the suffixes belong to the realm of popular and colloquial language rather than formal or impersonal literary style. The sources used in Gooch's book are extracted from novelists that depict scenes from ordinary Spanish life.

Gooch's guide to the meanings and uses of the diminutive suffixes is useful in order to account for the meanings chosen to be tested. The book provides large sections on the *–ita/-ito* suffix where he presents examples of the suffix with literary passages. He provides an attached glossary of the terms with the usage of the diminutive suffix.

1.4 Description of the hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to investigate the sensitivity of Spanish L2 speakers to the different connotations that the diminutive suffix conveys. Three research questions will be examined.

1. What meanings do L2 learners associate with the Spanish diminutive?

Because there is no literature found on the topic of L2 acquisition of the Spanish diminutive meanings, the first step is to determine how L2 learners interpret the Spanish *–ito/-ita*. Are they able to perceive the full range of meanings associated with the diminutive? Do they favour some meanings over others? These questions have not yet been examined for Spanish L2 learners.

2. As proficiency levels increase, are L2 learners more accurate in their interpretation of the diminutive when selecting meanings?

I hypothesized that L2 learners will show more native-like responses as the level becomes higher. The lowest levels will show less native-like responses and the higher levels' responses will resemble more those of the NSs'. The L2 learners at the lowest levels will show the most transfer from their L1 since they have not figured out the L2 mappings and assume the diminutive in Spanish works similarly as it works in English, as the studies by Ijaz, Kellerman, and Kroll and De Groot that were reviewed above have shown.

In addition, L2 Learners will perceive most meanings of the diminutive but will favour the central meanings. Ijaz's study found that L2 speakers correspond most to NS in the central meanings ascribed to a word, and less so in more peripheral meanings. Therefore, I hypothesize that even if L2 learners are capable of perceiving most meanings of the diminutive, they will show a higher tendency to select the central meanings than NS.

3. As proficiency levels increase do L2 learners show more native-like polysemy in their selection of meanings?

A broader range of meanings is expected as the level of proficiency gets higher. Proficiency will play a positive role in the sensitivity to polysemy where the low levels of proficiency will show less sensitivity to the range of meanings of the NS group than the higher levels of proficiency.

Chapter one presented the problem that the diminutive in Spanish shows due to its polysemous nature. This chapter also showed previous studies that investigated the acquisition of polysemous items in L2 and the interpretation of such. A compilation of the meanings of the Spanish diminutive was provided prior to the presentation of the meanings chosen for this study. The chapter concludes with the description of the hypotheses investigated throughout this work. In Chapter 2, I will describe the data collection method used in this study including the description of instruments and subjects. The results of the data collected will be presented in Chapter 3 and discussed in Chapter 4 in light of the hypotheses and the previous studies outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 2

Method

In this chapter a description of the three types of subjects examined in the study will be provided. Information with respect to the background and experience with the language will be presented as well as the number of participants from each group will be given. Subjects' information will be followed by the instruments used to measure several variables. The first instrument described showed background of the participants; the second provides the criteria used for the design of the test for L2 learners of Spanish; the third instrument was used for the self-assessment of L2 proficiency; and finally the test for monolingual English speakers is described. The last instrument described is the interview format used for the study. At the end of this chapter the timeline of the data collection will be given and finally I will explain how the NS standard of comparison was established in the data analysis method.

2.1 Subjects

2.1.1 Bilingual speakers with English as their First Language and with Spanish as their Second Language

The data for this study were gathered at a Canadian university. The 224 participants were volunteers whose first language was English and who were currently taking Spanish as a second language. The test was administered in the fall term of 2004 during class time. The classes visited were undergraduate language courses in the first-semester, third-semester, fifth-semester and fourth-year levels. As well, the data gathered contain tests from fourteen graduate students, instructors and professors at the university, whose field

of study was Spanish-related and who as well had English as their L1. In this manner, the data in the study include a range of levels that was organized and classified according to the levels of proficiency from the self-assessment grid described in section 2.2.3 and not from the course level that the participants were enrolled in. The lower levels were the most numerous groups in the study: 116 for the A levels, 102 for the B levels and only 16 for the C levels. The NN level, being the most proficient of all the levels, was also small; the participants were taken from graduate students and professors whose Spanish reached the near-native (NN) level of proficiency.

2.1.2 Native speakers (NS) of Spanish

For the purpose of setting a standard NS answer to compare the L2 speakers to, 38 NS of Spanish were given the same test that the L2 speakers used. 24 women and 14 men, all NS, answered the test and completed an oral interview. The participants in this group were from Spanish-speaking countries. Eighteen participants were from Mexico, four from Venezuela, five from Chile, three from Ecuador, three from Argentina, three from Spain, two from El Salvador and one from Colombia.

2.1.3 Monolingual English speakers (MES)

Fourteen undergraduate male students who have no knowledge of other languages than English were given the test for monolingual English speakers (see section 2.2.4). They stated having no knowledge or interest in learning another language. These participants responses served to compare the associations that English speakers make with respect to the word 'little', which is usually the translation of the diminutive. In this way, the

associations that these group have with the concept of 'little' serve to verify a possible L1 transfer to the L2 diminutive.

2.2 Instruments

The instruments used in this work include four different tests and non-structured oral interviews. The tests were designed to be answered by learners of Spanish as a second language and NS of Spanish. The results of the L2 learners were compared to those of NS. The description of the instruments will be presented in the following sections.

2.2.1 Background questionnaire (Appendix A)

The background questionnaire was administered to survey participants' gender, age, ethnicity and language spoken at home. All 238 participants answered questions regarding the source of their knowledge of Spanish, where they explained where and how many Spanish courses they have taken. This questionnaire had a section where students rated themselves on their knowledge of other languages. The questionnaire was designed to ensure that learners had the same background. The questionnaire also enquired about the students' interest in Spanish and their contact with it; thus questions regarding not only the instruction but their contact with the language were formulated in order to assess the exposure they have had with Spanish outside the classroom. Nine students were found not to be NS of English and thus were eliminated due to the uniqueness of their cases which made for a less homogenous group.

2.2.2 Test for learners of Spanish as a Second Language (Appendix B)

2.2.2.1 Meanings chosen

In order to design an effective and not too exhaustive test, ten meanings were chosen to represent most of the closely related meanings found to be productive in the NS. Basing the meaning range on ten broad meanings, the test led into meanings that are more specific depending on the word being tested. The several meanings grouped under representative terms were analyzed separately according to each term. Taking into consideration that there is not a clear cut distinction among many of the meanings, the following is a list of the ten meanings and under each one of them I provide closely related meanings with a brief description of the rationale used for the grouping of connotations.

1. Smallness: Dainty, delicate, little in size

Under this category all the meanings that refer to small things or that make reference to the physical size of an entity are classified. Example: *La **pelotita** de la muñeca*. 'The doll's little ball'.

2. Young: Children, new

Under this category are the meanings that connote short age or short time. This category refers to the diminutive related to time. This category can overlap with the category of affection where the feelings for small children described in Taylor's typology are based on an experiential frame as the lack of embarrassment when cuddling and caressing children gives rise to the [affective] meaning. Example: *El **perrito** está durmiendo*. 'The puppy is sleeping'.

3. Affection: Endearing, tenderness, nicenes

This category encloses meanings that are related to any connotation referring to feelings of affection and tenderness. Example: ***Mi hijito***. 'My little son'.

4. Softener: Reduction in intensity, short duration of time, reduction in strength, reduction in scale of entity, apologetic.

This category includes all the meanings that express a diminution in intensity; whether it is time, strength, size or the impact of an event, this category focuses on the aspectual process of diminution and not on the diminution itself. The [apologetic] meaning was included under this category as a softener since the diminutive is often used when requesting; in this case the diminutive softens the request and is considered a softener. Example: ***Con permisito***. 'Excuse me'.

5. Pity

Gooch's diminutive meaning of [pity] stands on its own as the feeling of discomfort expressed here is not one that can be grouped under the next category [DOV]. Feelings of pity are not necessarily negative feelings; sympathy and condescendence can both emerge from pity. The attitude of the speaker here is what is sought. If the attitude is clearly negative, then [DOV] would be the meaning allotted. On the other hand, if the attitude of the speaker is clearly sympathetic, then a connotation towards [affection] would be more appropriate. The lack of knowledge with respect the speakers' attitude is what makes this meaning a category on its own. Example: ***Está enfermito.*** 'He is sick'.

6. DOV: Lack of worth, depreciation, derogatory, poor quality event

All the meanings which are clearly negative, connoting diminution of worth are grouped under this label. Taylor works with the notion of decrement in size and worth and so the chain produced from the negative feelings is seen here as one whole group whose

negative feelings vary in intensity and thus in meaning. Example: *El **conciertito** de música*. 'The little music concert'.

7. Approximation: Process of intermittent events, repetition of events

This category combines three meanings that are all different from each other where the common factor among them was the low productivity of each meaning. However, the meanings do appear in Spanish and specific examples for the testing of its existence were provided in the test of this study. The [approximative] meaning here refers to expressions of quantity where a possible [apologetic] meaning can be derived from the lack of precision. Example: Approximation: *En un **segundito** te atiendo*. "I'll be with you in a second". Repetition of events or intermittent events: *Traigo esa **cancioncita***. "I have that little song (in my head)".

8. Superlative: Augmentation in size, intensifier

The usage of these meanings based on a metonymic extension can also produce contradictory meanings since the obvious meaning expressed with the diminutive conveys smallness and feelings of affection as the most frequent meanings. We also find the diminutive conveying the opposite, which is due to an intensification of the meaning that in some cases leads to the augmentation of the entity referred to. In addition an intensification meaning can be derived from the focus of an aspect of the word that the speaker considers salient. This is a metonymic extension of the central meaning; the centre of an entity is necessarily of smaller dimensions than the entity in its totality, which also represents the essence of such entity. This essence then is magnified by the usage of the diminutive and thus it can result in an augmentative meaning. Example:

Superlative: *El roble, ¡qué **arbolito***! "The oak, what a little tree!" Intensifier: *Los hermanos son **igualitos***. 'The brothers are the same'.

9. Sarcastic:

This meaning differs from the one explained above in that the opposition to what the term means stems not from a metonymic extension but from the speaker's intention of its illocutionary force. This meaning was added to the list as many NS perceive the diminutive to express a tone instead of a specific meaning. The speaker's intention can connote sarcasm any time without any typological argument needed. Any term can mean the opposite if the speaker's intention is to imply it with tone. Given an artificial context the diminutive can mean for the participant the opposite of what it means at core. Example: *Qué bonito **relojito** tienes*. 'What a nice little watch you have'.

10. Respect: Honorific, respectful

The meaning of [respect] was added to the list as NS from certain demographics showed constant usage of the diminutive with this meaning. The diminutive connoting honor and respect is not uncommon but has not been discussed by any of the typological works found. This usage was found in literature concerning cultural studies on the indigenous people from Latin America (Gonzalez, 2001). Example: *¿Cómo está mi **jefecito**?* 'How are you, father?'

The objective of the test was to capture the preferred meanings of English speakers when presented with the Spanish diminutive suffix in several contexts. A multiple choice format was the layout for the test. Due to time restrictions, it had to be readjusted from a previously-used tested 56-question acceptability test to a 15-question multiple-choice test. Students were allotted fifteen minutes for the completion of the test.

In each question they were asked to pick from between six to ten possible English phrases the best translation of an underlined Spanish word and mark it with the number 1. Any other possible translations were indicated with the number 2 so that students could choose more than one possible translation. They were also offered the option "I don't know" in case they were unsure about how to translate the Spanish meaning, as well as an option where they could write down their own translations of the terms in case no offered meaning was considered suitable as a possible translation. A distractor was shuffled in among the meanings. The lexical and syntactic nature of each term required different senses and in this way it was impossible to offer a translation for every connotation. For this reason, amongst other reasons that will be discussed in the section describing each term, every term tested different senses and thus every sentence offered different translations favoring different senses.

The sentences provided throughout the test were designed according to a twofold question with respect the context to be provided. In previous pilot tests, it was shown that two perspectives could be taken when designing the phrase for the diminutive affix *–ita -ito*. The question that arose was whether we should have a sentence containing a context that provides information that would trigger a certain specific response in the participants, or whether as little information as possible should be in the sentence thus allowing for a variety of meanings that *–ita/-ito* could also express. The latter approach was chosen since the objective of the study was on the connotations that the diminutive can evoke in certain words. In order to verify the strong polysemic nature of the suffix *–ita/-ito*, the number of connotations perceived by the participants was measured, as well as the accuracy (native-like perception) of the meaning perceived by the L2 learners.

Therefore, a sentence with a strong context compelling a specific meaning would not serve as a good indicator of what the suffix does to a word; on the contrary it would be the very context which triggers the connotation as opposed to the suffix itself. For example, in a sentence like *Odio a tu* ***noviecita*** "I hate your girlfriend", the meaning that participants would most likely have chosen of all the options would be the [DOV] because of the strongly negative nature of the sentence. This would have left slight chances for the other connotations to be considered. On the other hand, some words were embedded into the contexts not to trigger a specific translation but to make sure peripheral senses were considered over the core ones. In sentences where the context that hosts the diminutive word is conveying largeness, a natural sense of contradiction can rise in non-NS when having the diminutive attached, such as in *El Cadillac es un* ***cochecito*** *caro* "The Cadillac is an expensive car". The context used in two other cases was designed to provide an expressive sentence where the diminutive attached can only connote one vernacular meaning to any NS, such as in such as in ***Mamacita,*** *estás buena* "Mom you are good". In this manner, the decision was made regarding what kind of sentences the terms using the suffix were going to be embedded in.

The list of translations was set in an arbitrary order to prevent the participants from giving automated responses without reading thoroughly all the available options. An analysis of the NSs' answers with the senses favored by them will be presented in the analysis of results. These senses will serve as point of comparison to evaluate the L2 speakers' responses. The selection of terms for the test was based on the inclusion of as many of the senses as possible that NS of Spanish have shown in their dialects. Each of the sentences provided in the test looks for a specific connotation that was favored by NS.

The sentences in the test were designed to trigger a certain connotation in NS and therefore it would be possible to compare L2 speakers' answers to it. A number of terms chosen for the test carry certain cultural content that is perceived in specific ways by NS, such as in *Los **inditos** mexicanos venden dulces*. "The Mexican Indians sell candy". A detailed description of each phrase will be provided in the next section with charts laying out the senses that the translations were representing attached in Appendix C.

2.2.2.2 ¿Dónde está tu noviecita? "Where is your girlfriend?"

Here the sentence used the interrogative format and a neuter context that would not trigger any specific connotation. The noun tested here does not carry any obvious negative or positive connotations; *noviecita* "girlfriend + suffix" would only have a sarcastic tone if the speaker intends it that way or if the listener interprets it that way. Room for such subjective interpretation was left in the option where participants can write their own translation. Two options were offered for the [DOV] option: [depreciation] and [derogatory]. Since there is practically no overlap in most of the senses presented for the diminutive, the representation of both senses was possible and thus provided. The two different options were offered and labeled under one category for economy when classifying the senses.

2.2.2.3 ¿Dónde está el padrecito? "Where is the priest?"

Here an interrogative sentence and a neuter context were chosen. The selection of the word *padrecito* "priest+suffix", in contrast with *noviecita,* refers to a religious title which connotes strong values of authority amongst religious speakers. In contrast with *noviecita*

this term was chosen to test the values of authority and respect. The word itself carries a strong context that can trigger the translations that carry such connotations.

2.2.2.4 La casita es roja. "The house is red"

Because of the lexical inanimate nature of the word this term was included in the test to elicit different responses than the animate nouns presented before. The context provided for this sentence is neutral and so is the word *casita;* thus it tries not to favor any specific meanings.

2.2.2.5 El cadillac es un cochecito caro. "The cadillac is an expensive car"

This sentence allowed for an option that could translate *cochecito* as cheap with an ironic sense since Cadillac cars are not known to be cheap cars. This sense points out the opposite of what the sentence implies. Therefore, a different rationale in the choice of context was used in this case. Not only was the brand of the car introduced for a [sarcastic] reading, but also to infer the size of the car. In essence the diminutive connotes smallness; thus applying the suffix of diminution to a word that connotes bigness gives room for the diminutive *–ita/-ito* to express something other than [smallness]. In this way, participants have all the available options laid out to pick from, with the exception of [softener] and [approximation].

2.2.2.6 La lluviecita duró ocho horas. "The rain lasted eight hours"

This is one of the most transparent and common cases where the [softener] sense can be tested. The [reduction in strength] ([RS]) and the [short duration in time] ([SDT]) are two of the several senses that fall under the category of [softener]. The context in this case

offers a length of time for the *lluviecita,* which suggests to the participant the interpretation of meanings related to time. The context in the sentence was designed to convey some contradiction as the term with the diminutive is mixed in a context that implies duration in time.

2.2.2.7 Ese hombrecito, no tiene valor para pelear. "That man has no guts to fight"

The context was designed to play a bigger role than the term itself. In this case, the word with the suffix was embedded into a phrase that would trigger negative connotations of the word. Leaving out the senses connoting [young], [softener], [approximation] and [sarcasm], the participants still had the option where they can write their own translation of the underlined word on the line provided. The purpose for this term to be presented in such a context is to be able to make assumptions about the lack or presence of a context that can or cannot trigger a specific response in participants.

2.2.2.8 Mamacita, estás buena. "Mom you are good"

This sentence has a strong cultural value attached to it. The context offered and the nature of the term has a strong slang usage. Here, the word was posited in a context that could only be read one way for any NS as a comment on the physical attributes of the woman. The sexual connotation was intended to be perceived with no hesitation by NS. The isolated term *mamacita* could in fact have a different reading if posited in a context implying motherhood. Nonetheless the context offered did not provide such reading. In addition, *estás buena* heavily implied a commentary on the physical attributes of a woman.

2.2.2.9 El niño está muy feito. "The kid is very ugly"

Even though [young] was an obvious sense to connote, because the context offered the word *kid* in it, it was not provided in the list due to the meaning of youth already implied. The physical negative attributes that the word *feito* "ugly+suffix" connotes can work in the opposite direction if a sarcastic tone is perceived. In this manner the translation "pretty" was offered as a possible reading of sarcasm.

2.2.2.10 Pobrecita niña. "Poor girl"

Spanish and English often use the term *pobrecita* as an expression of pity. One of the literal translations for this term is "poor thing". Offering the adjective *poor* (as in poverty) as a meaning in every alternative intended to force participants to react against the translations offered. The sentence has no verb in it and, thus it cannot mean *poor* as in poverty; the sentence would have to be structured as in *La niña es pobre* "The girl is poor". The sense was offered in the list in *poor* and *pitiful,* to examine the strength of the senses when present or absent. [Young] was omitted from the list as its meaning was already understood by *niña* "girl". The presence of such sense could have influenced the answers towards that direction.

2.2.2.11 Ahorita te hablo por teléfono. "I'll call you now on the phone"

One of the senses of diminutivization in expressive language is the addition of the suffix to words of other grammatical categories than nouns. The diminutivization of this adverb of time is allowed by NS and expresses various meanings that usually vary according to region. The term *ahora* has a different meaning than the term with diminutive affix; this

will be discussed in the analysis section. The selection of the context for this term was manipulated to be in the present tense. We see in the sentence *Ahorita te hablo por teléfono* "I'll call you now on the phone" that the verb *hablo* uses the future sense that the simple present often implies in Spanish. If the verb was conjugated in the past tense the possible senses to choose from would be restricted because the temporal value of the adverb that is under enquiry refers to a *postponing* sense. In such case the connotations with the sense of [defer], i.e. "in a second", "in a while", or "never", would not be considered as options by the subjects. This term is the only case presented with the optional sense of [approximation in time].

2.2.2.12 Por favorcito dame un pedazo de pan. "Please give me a piece of bread"

The function of this expression in its bare form is that of a politeness marker. The use of the diminutive has an effect on the politeness marker that presumes a necessary request.. The focus in this case is directed towards the strength of the plea that the interjection conveys with the attached suffix. The options given in the list of translations look for a variation in the tone of the request. In this manner the context selected for the word was kept neutral in order to leave the emphasis on the interjection itself without trying to influence the responses.

2.2.2.13 Eres muy chistosito. "You are very funny"

The adjective in this sentence shows a typical adjective diminutivization in Spanish where speakers often add the *–ita/-ito* suffix to convey several senses, the same senses that have been found to be used in nouns. The difference is noticeable when we translate

a diminutivized noun and a diminutivized adjective, as the translation needs an interpretation of the diminutive by the translator, unlike nouns which can often be translated into English with the addition of the adjective 'little'. The inclusion of adjectives in the study tests the perceptions of L2 speakers towards a productive suffixation in Spanish. The qualifying adjective here posited has a clear positive sense as an essential meaning in the term, where being 'funny' is unarguably a positive trait of human character.

2.2.2.14 Los inditos mexicanos venden dulces. "The Mexican Indians sell candy"

The selection of this term is based on the opposite extreme attitudes found in previous data from NS. The inclusion of this culturally charged term in the test intends to verify the intuitions of L2 speakers when looking at terms whose connotations vary greatly amongst NS. The enormous cultural weight that the term *inditos* carries in Mexico and Latin America can be perceived as unusual or incorrect by speakers whose dialect experience with Indians differs from that of Latin-Americans. The prescriptive way for the diminutivization of *indio* is however not *indito* as in the phrase given but *indiecito*; the term *indito* is the common diminutivization form that speakers from Mexico choose. A possible lexicalization is tested here in this case of a racially charged term, which causes several reactions among speakers, whether native or not. The sentence was created to situate the subjects of the phrase as being from a specific nationality; in this way the *inditos* "indians" are specifically from Mexico and therefore it narrows down the interpretation to a personal commentary on the perception of a group of people. Besides the design of the phrase being created in order to situate the term in a cultural and social

context, it did not intend to trigger a specific connotation, as the context is still a neutral phrase that does not favor any senses.

2.2.2.15 El niño está crecidito. "The kid is developed"

The term under study here has the lexical category of an adjective; the diminutivization of adjectives is a productive non- prescriptive phenomenon. The translation of adjectival terms that have gone through diminutivization of this kind is even less transparent than the translation of a diminutivized noun. However, the inclusion of this adjective in the test is evaluating the L2 speakers' intuition again about the diminutive regardless of the exposure to the form. The usage of this term is not standard, and for many participants whose L1 is not Spanish it will be a guessing task, which in turn reflects what the concept of diminution is for speakers of English. Thus, the context was kept neutral to allow more emphasis on the term.

2.2.2.16 Mi patroncito me mandó a comprar el periódico. "My boss sent me to buy the paper"

This term is one of those chosen for its cultural value, which connotes hierarchical social values. The term with the diminutive attached often produces immediate social evaluation from the NS participant. This social evaluation is tested with the eight senses offered. The context in use here is one that emphasizes the ranking nature of the term *patroncito* "boss+suffix", where the verb used also connotes a strong sense of authority, emphasizing in this manner the position of authority of the subject in the sentence. In the analysis section I will explain the associations that such term triggered in NS of Spanish,

as opposed to L2 speakers whose interpretation of the diminutivized term is tested according to cultural knowledge.

2.2.3 Self- assessment grid

Due to the great variety of levels in a language class, as well as to the difficulty of assigning levels to language learners, a self-assessment test was provided to determine the levels of proficiency for the study. Even though the classes visited were classified by levels of proficiency (SPANISH 111, SPANISH 210, SPANISH 300, SPANISH 400 etc...), the inequality of proficiency in each class was clear. Thus an additional instrument to measure and classify in a more accurate manner the language proficiency of the subjects was implemented. The European Scale's self-assessment grid (*European Language Portfolio*, 1998) was chosen because it is designed in a simple and effective way; such test did not require more than five minutes to be answered and the information that its results provide are thorough and well organized. This is a standard test that was designed for the European Language Portfolio students; with such a test students would self-assess their knowledge of any language and with the completion of additional tests, they are placed in the corresponding level. In this test students answered questions regarding their skills on listening, reading, speaking interaction, speaking production and writing. The self-assessment grid classified the levels of proficiency into levels A1 and A2 for beginners, B1 and B2 for intermediate and finally C1 and C2 for the advanced levels. Given that the European Language Portfolio's self assessment test measures five skills, results from the test did not always fall in a straightforward manner into a particular proficiency category. Mixed results were provided reflecting various strengths in different skills. Three levels used were added to the six offered by this test. A3, B3 and

NN were added to the study to provide a wider range of proficiency levels. Therefore the original test's A2 and B2 became in the study A3 and B3. The study's A2 and B2 are the intermediate levels between the original A1/ A2 and B1/ B2 correspondingly. The new intermediate levels were created to account for those tests that showed mixed results, having strong skills in different levels and thus not showing a clear A1/ A2 level or B1/ B2 level. The NN level was introduced for those participants who excelled at Spanish and whose proficiency was beyond C2 as they were either language instructors or had lived in an L2 country for several years. In this manner nine levels of proficiency in the L2 were provided for this investigation, where eight of them were based on the self-assessment test.

2.2.4 Test for monolingual English speakers (Appendix D)

A test was designed to be distributed among English speakers whose first language was English and who did not speak any other languages to make sure there was no transfer from other languages into their answers. Participants here were tested on their notion of smallness. The English test contained eleven of the fifteen sentences that the L2 learners were given in the bilingual test; a sentence was added to include all the intended connotations under enquiry in the bilinguals' test. The sentences in this test differ from the ones in the bilingual test since this is an all English test so the translations of the terms that have the attached Spanish suffix could not have an equivalent productive English suffix. The opted translation for all the terms was the use of the adjective *little* + *noun;* this partly explains why not all the provided terms in the bilingual test were given in the monolingual test, as the English adjective *little* cannot modify adverbs or interjections. In the sentences where the use of the Spanish diminutive could be opposite

to the central meanings such as *Eres muy chistosito* "You are very funny +suffix", but was nonetheless accepted by NS, the usage of the diminutive had to be dynamically translated, meaning that the syntactic contradiction would have been lost and hence the purpose of the study hindered. For this reason problematic sentences like this were omitted from the monolingual test. The following figure displays the sentences not used in the monolingual test and gives a brief explanation of the reason why the translation in English was problematic.

Sentence	Reason for omission
El niño está crecidito.	The intensifier function of the diminutive added to the adjective produces a translation that excludes any conceptualizing diminution. i.e. The kid is very developed.
Ahorita te hablo por teléfono.	The suffix added to an adverb does not permit a translation that keeps the adverb diminutivized. The translation of the sentence requires a decision from the translator regarding the sense preferred.
Por favorcito dame un pedazo de pan.	English does not use the softening of a request by modifying an interjection. The translation loses the diminution value that is interpretable in Spanish.
Eres muy chistosito.	The intensifier that modifies the adjective is contradictory when adding a diminutive affix. Such phenomenon requires a dynamic translation that keeps the meaning and loses the form, which is specifically the subject under enquiry.

Figure 2.1. Sentences omitted from monolingual English speakers' test.

In this test participants were asked to choose paraphrases of *little* to make the monolinguals' test comparable to the one offered to the L2 speakers. When looking at the results of this group we will consider beforehand their monolingual status; thus the L2 uninfluenced nature of their responses was valued. In this manner we interpret this group's results as pertaining to an English chain of meanings and not to a Spanish one. Thus any similarities to the related senses that the Spanish diminutive affix holds will be

indicative of an English repertoire of meanings associated with *little*. The meanings associated with the term share significant resemblance with the meanings associated with the suffix *–ita/-ito,* as shown in the entry for *little* in the Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary:

> **1 :** not big: as **a :** small in size or extent : TINY <has little feet> **b :** YOUNG <was too little to remember> **c** of a plant or animal : small in comparison with related forms -- used in vernacular names **d :** small in number **e :** small in condition, distinction, or scope <big business trampling on the little fellow> **f :** NARROW, MEAN <the pettiness of little minds> **g :** pleasingly small <a cute little thing> **h** -- used as an intensive <why, you little devil!>**2 :** not much: as **a :** existing only in a small amount or to a slight degree <has little money> **b :** short in duration : BRIEF **c :** existing to an appreciable though not extensive degree or amount -- used with a <had a little money in the bank>**3 :** small in importance or interest : TRIVIAL. (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1995, p.790).

It is not surprising that the English adjective *little* evokes similar connotations to the diminutive affix in Spanish since both derive from the concept of smallness, and such concept is found in the experiential frame of most individuals. The notion of size is one experienced since the early stages of the human life through the everyday process of events that compose people's reality. When looking at the definition offered for the English adjective a chain of related meanings is found as well. We observe important

similarities such as meanings related to youth, quantity, cuteness, short duration, small in importance and intensification.

2.2.5 Interviews

After the completion of the tests 10 subjects from the NS group, 15 subjects from the L2 groups and 6 monolingual speakers were asked to participate in an oral interview to explain their answers. A week after the completion of the test these participants were asked to have a one-on-one interview with the researcher. The format of the interview was an informal five to ten minute discussion about sentences that were considered to be peculiar or unexpected. The questions discussed in the oral interviews were the ones that differed from the common translations picked by most participants since most people had certain preferred translations over the rest; thus in such case the answers were different or needed clarification. In this way, there was not an arranged set of questions for the participants of the study.

2.3 Timeline for data collection

All the testing was conducted at the beginning of the second month of the 2004 fall term. Throughout the month of October five Spanish 111, five Spanish 211, two Spanish 300 and one Spanish 475 classes were visited, where the background questionnaire, the self-assessment grid and the test for learners of Spanish as a Second Language were administered all at the same time. Participants were allotted 25 minutes to finish all three tests. Fifteen minutes were allotted for the test for learners of Spanish as a Second Language, while the self-assessment and the background questionnaire took approximately ten minutes. The NN, NS and MES groups were as well contacted in the

second month of the 2004 fall term via e-mail and personal contact. Participants of these groups were allotted five minutes to answer the tests since their level of proficiency allowed for quicker responses. The interviews with all groups were conducted a few days after the tests were reviewed by the researcher.

2.4 Data analysis

In this section a method of comparison of the L2 responses to the NS responses will be established. The terms used in the test will be grouped according to the strength of preference that the NS showed. These preferences can be considered in light of two criteria: 1) accuracy and 2) polysemy. In this manner two categories will be used to compare L2 speakers' top answers to NS's top answers: 1) Accurate meanings shown by L2 speakers and 2) Polysemy shown by L2 speakers. The first category includes all the terms where the NS's selection of a given meaning showed a percentage roughly around 40%. This percentage is considered high as the overall results showed a widespread distribution. A somewhat arbitrary 40 % percentage was established as a high percentage based on a more specific 30% percentile differential between the top connotations and the second top connotations in the NS. Because of wide variation in these data, it was seen that anything with a 30% or a higher difference in percentage between the top two answers would be a significant difference as it shows little competition for the top answer. The difference between the top two connotations was calculated by measuring the distance between both by setting as the reference the percentage of the highest connotation and subtracting from it the percentage of the second top connotation divided by the reference percentage yielding the formula (A-B)/A, where the top connotation equals A and the second top connotation equals B. In this manner all top connotations

were analyzed to determine if they had a significant differential that would as well determine such connotation as a 'strong preference' by NS. NS's 'strong preferences' were then established to be the accurate responses to which L2 speakers' preferences would be compared.

Figure 2.2 shows all the terms ordered by NS's strength of preference. The strong preferences will be shown first and then terms where there was no 'strong preference' will be displayed with an asterisk.

Term	Differential %	Top 2 terms	%
Mamacita	83.3%	Superlative Affection	85.7% 14.3%
Casita	77.4%	Smallness Affection	77.5% 17.5%
Patroncito	65.2%	Respect Affection	56.1% 19.5%
Feito	64.7%	Softener Pity	42.5% 15%
Hombrecito	63%	DOV Pity	62.8% 23.3%
Porfavorcito	61.1%	Affection Smallness	40.9% 15.9%
Crecidito	57.1%	Superlative Young	52.5% 22.5%
Pobrecito	42.1%	Pity Affection	47.5% 27.5%
Padrecito	42%	Respect Affection	51.2% 29.3%
Chistosito	33.3%	Sarcasm DOV	42.9% 28.6%
Noviecita	30%	DOV Affection	46.5% 32.6%
*Lluviecita	17.6%	DOV Softener	41.5% 34.1%
*Cochecito	16.7%	Respect Superlative	28.6% 23.8%
*Ahorita	15.4%	Superlative Affection	25.5% 21.6%
*Indito	0%	Young Pity	27.5% 27.5%

Figure 2.2. Top two percentages for NS with the percentage relative distance between them.

This chapter provided the description of the subjects who participated in the study as well as the instruments used. There were four questionnaires which were applied to different subjects. The first questionnaire described (Appendix A) was designed to provide information about the background of the subjects; this questionnaire was applied

to the three subject groups: the English speakers learning Spanish as an L2 (n= 224), NS of Spanish (n= 38) and finally to the monolingual English speaking group (n= 8). The test for learners of Spanish as a second language (Appendix B) was administered to L2 learners of Spanish (n= 224) and to NS of Spanish (n= 38). The self-assessment grid was given only to the 224 L2 learners of Spanish. The last questionnaire described was the test for monolingual English speakers (Appendix D) that was administered to only eight participants. In addition, there were interviews with 10 subjects from the NS group, 15 subjects from the L2 groups and 6 monolingual speakers that were given after the completion of the written tests. Finally the timeline of the data collection and the data analysis methods were provided at the end of the chapter. In the next chapter I will identify the NS standard of coparision for each word, followed by an examination of the L2 responses. The terms will be analyzed to determine what levels showed accuracy in sense selection as well as in polysemy.

Chapter 3

Results

In this chapter the analysis of the data and criteria for determining the accurate meaning chosen by L2 learners will be presented. For each term I will show the different meanings favored by NS. It is not only the use of nouns, adjectives, adverbs and conjunctions in the test which that makes the treatment of the analysis different in every case, but also the different contexts designed to either trigger or not trigger a certain connotation. In the following section I will elaborate the relevant results for each term and explain the particularities of each case. All the results of the L2 speakers are interpreted and compared to the NS results.

For each term I will show the top four answers chosen by each level (in some cases fewer than four connotations were chosen in total). Complete tables of all the top senses chosen are provided in Appendix E. Only the top choices were considered in the analysis, as opposed to counting all the meanings chosen in the test. Although the participants had the choice of selecting as many meanings as they wanted with a numerical order to indicate the hierarchy of their selection, it was concluded that only the number one answers were going to be counted as relevant data since most participants did not give more than one answer.

3.1 Mamacita, estás buena. "Mom you are good"

Table 3.1

Top Four Connotations for ***Mamacita*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
53.7	Affection	50.0	Affection	60.0	Affection
13.0	Don't know	20.0	Superlative	12.7	Smallness
11.1	Smallness	10.0	Smallness	10.9	Superlative
11.1	Respect	10.0	DOV	10.9	Respect

B1		B2		B3	
56.0	Affection	62.1	Affection	43.3	Affection
14.0	Superlative	13.8	Superlative	20.0	Smallness
12.0	Smallness	13.8	Respect	20.0	Superlative
12.0	Respect	10.3	Smallness	16.7	Respect

C1		C2	
50.0	Superlative	66.7	Affection
33.3	Respect	33.3	Superlative
16.7	Affection		

NN	
75.0	Superlative
12.5	Affection
12.5	Don't know

NS	
85.7	Superlative
14.3	Affection

MES	
42.9	Affection
42.9	Superlative
14.3	Don't know

This term, whose meaning is particular to NS who understand the slang value of the term, had 85.7% of the NS participants showing preference for the [superlative] meaning. The differential percentage between the most popular connotation and the second top connotation was at 83.3% the highest percentage in the study. The term was immersed in a context that complemented the good attributes already expressed by the term, where *estás buena* "you are good" complemented the positive connotations of the term. The high percentage agreed that 'voluptuous mom' was the best translation for the term. Often NS participants pointed out that the term *mamacita* had nothing to do with *mom*; in this case they either made a comment specifying that it was not a 'mother' that was referred to and kept their translation as that, or they opted for a translation of their own. Even though among NS there was variation, the consistency in meaning is quite strong as the term with the diminutive showed overall agreement on the positive physical attributes being connoted by the addition of the suffix. Whether it was the voluptuous translation or the "attractive woman" translation, the term conveyed approval of the physical attributes of a woman. Despite the fact that voluptuousness is associated with full-figured sensual women, ten NS participants instead showed a personal definition of the term that would redefine the meaning of *mamacita*, isolating attractive physical characteristics and not necessarily sensual characteristics ("babe", "attractive woman", "hot girl", "good looking" and "cute"). Thus, lexicalization is apparent in this term where regardless of the choice, the consensus was generally on the good physical attributes of a woman. NS's second and only choice apart from the previously discussed one was the [affective] meaning, with 14.3% of the participants opting for the translation "nice mom". Three out of five participants stated in the interview that "nice mom" meant "nice-looking mom".

At first glance it does not make sense that a NS would opt for such a translation where the meaning that "nice" was intended to represent was that of [affection]. To any NS the term *mamacita* does not intend to connote any meanings associated with an affective mother; instead, what these participants translated as "nice mom" had to do as well with physical characteristics of attractiveness. Several NS participants explained in the oral interview that by choosing the "nice mom" translation, which was intended to capture in L2 learners an [affective] meaning, they thought that "nice" referred to physical looks and not to "personality", "essence" or "someone's character". Just as in the "voluptuous mom" translation where 85.7% of the native speaking group did not take the *mom* term in the literal 'mother' way, the remaining 14.3% who opted for "nice mom" as the best translation did not translate 'mom' literally.

When looking at the L2 participants, seven levels opted for the [affective] meaning and only the C1 and NN levels opted for the [superlative] meaning. The differential percentage between the top answer and the second top answer was for almost all L2 groups above the established 30% for the NS. The overall percentage that the [affective] meaning had among all levels indicated that it was the preferred translation and several interviews indicated that these L2 participants were in fact translating 'mom' literally. However, we have a number of participants at every level who were acquainted with the term *mamacita* as [superlative] and it showed to be the second best translation for all levels in B and in C. I suggest that these participants did not translate 'mom' in the literal way where such literal translation would have been awkward. In this way the high responses here were indicative of lexicalization for people who are acquainted with the usage of the term *mamacita*, they did not analyze the term literally. Several L2

participants responded in the oral interview that they "had heard the term before" and claimed to know the meaning. A correlation that is observed is the amount of variation in responses among levels, where the basic levels had more variety in the number of meanings picked, while the higher proficiency levels showed a smaller range of meanings.

When looking at polysemy we compare the number of connotations picked by NS and then compare them to L2 speakers. As NS only had two choices for this term, it did not show high polysemy, therefore the accuracy here will be based on low polysemy from L2s. The higher levels showed accuracy in choosing fewer meanings for the term. The higher rate in accuracy that the proficient levels showed over the lower levels indicated a reflection of the wider vocabulary that participants with more exposure to the language have. Given that the term showed lexicalization the accuracy on this term is solely due to previous knowledge of the meaning of the term as a whole without computing the suffixation. Terms like *fajitas, burrito,* and *mamacita* show a high degree of lexicalization as speakers who do not speak Spanish do not need to use metalinguistic knowledge to determine the meaning of the word because they know the meaning of the term as a single lexical unit. Thus, the meaning that was favored by most L2's was the [affection] meaning which coincides with the second most favored meaning among the NS. However, the high responses of this meaning can be considered a miscalculation of the test's design. The translation that aimed at representing the [affective] meaning 'nice mom' was instead being translated as 'good looking' by the NS, which is what the term connotes. On the other hand the L2 speakers did not see the 'nice mom' translation as having anything to do with looks, but with [affection]; for this reason the interpretation of

both groups' choice for the [affective] meaning is different. It remains unclear what high-level groups meant with their high response for [affection]; being proficient levels, they could have interpreted the "nice mom" option as "good looking" as well. We can tentatively suggest that this lexicalization is not learned until the higher levels, but we do not know for sure. Furthermore, this term showed the most accuracy from higher levels in both the choice of meanings they had and the polysemy.

3.2 La casita es roja. "The house is red"

Table 3.2

Top Four Connotations for ***Casita*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
48.1	Smallness	50.0	Smallness	60.4	Smallness
27.8	Affection	30.0	DOV	11.3	Don't know
13.0	Don't know	10.0	Affection	9.4	Young/New
9.3	Young/New	10.0	Respect	7.5	Affection

B1		B2		B3	
72.9	Smallness	57.1	Smallness	74.1	Smallness
20.8	Affection	28.6	Affection	18.5	Affection
2.1	Young/New	10.7	Young/New	7.4	Young/New
2.1	DOV	3.6	Distractor		

C1		C2	
66.7	Smallness	83.3	Smallness
33.3	Affection	16.7	Young/New

NN	
77.8	Smallness
11.1	Young/New
11.1	Affection

NS	
77.5	Smallness
17.5	Affection
2.5	Pity
2.5	DOV

MES	
76.9	Smallness
23.1	Affection

This term showed a unanimous preference from all groups to associate the suffix with [smallness] as the top choice. The differential percentage in NS that was shown between the top two choices was 77.4%. This means that the choice of translation for this term was a strong one. As mentioned before the minimum differential was set to be 30%, which in this case is quite above it. The context used for this word was a neutral one that was intended not to add meaning to the term with the diminutive. The second most picked meaning by NS as the best translation was the [affective] meaning; thus this term conveyed in most participants the two core meanings of the diminutive *–ita/-ito*. This suggests that a term with no specific values attached to it triggered in both groups the default meanings of the diminutive, [smallness] and [affection].

All the L2 levels opted for the meaning of [smallness] with a strong differential percentage of over 40%. The third most occurring meaning, with the exception of A1, A2, C2 or NS, was the [young] meaning with the "new house" translation for *casita*. Both C levels' second choice was the translation "new house" which was grouped under the [young] category because of the expression of temporal shortness that is conveyed when using the adjective *new*. This meaning was the third most popular answer after the [smallness] and the [affection] translations among the rest of the groups. *New* was interpreted to be what the suffix connoted in *house* when adding the diminutive to it. Hence, although *new* was grouped under [young], I suggest a possible change of grouping where *new* in this case is not reflecting any temporal notions; instead the meaning of an intensification can be derived from the [new] meaning. In such case a metonymic extension is not applicable since *house* does not have an inherent meaning that relates to time; on the other hand, the value of such a word and the associations that

the term triggers are in fact highly related to feelings of well-being and security. Thus, the value of the term might be strongly related to the sentimental value and or to the actual value of the entity *house*. With this analysis I suggest that the [smallness] meaning was favored as the neutrality of the word predominated over the rest of the meanings; in this case the core meaning was primarily [smallness] and not [affection].

When we look at polysemy, even though there was a strong percentage opting for the [smallness] meaning, the NS had four choices in total for this term. All the L2 levels A and B, with the exception of A3 and B3, had four connotations picked for the diminutive, which is the same number as the NS had picked. The type of proficiency correlation seen in this case illustrates more clearly the two juxtaposed accuracies tested, which is the number of connotations picked per level and the number of responses per connotation picked. This term triggered in L2 speakers of higher proficiency level high percentages for the [smallness] meaning, but they also showed lower numbers of meanings picked, which is not surprising if they are picking [smallness] more. All levels of L2 speakers did select the accurate meaning provided by the NS; nonetheless they show a different number of meanings picked (polysemy). The polysemy shown by NS was seen in the lower levels of L2 speakers in terms of number of meanings picked but did not match the type of meanings picked by NS. In this way the four meanings picked by the NS were different than the four meanings picked by A1, A2, B1 and B2, where the number of meanings picked is correct but they did not correspond to the same meanings picked by NS.

3.3 Mi patroncito me mandó a comprar el periódico. "My boss sent me to buy the paper"

Table 3.3

Top Four Connotations for ***Patroncito*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
25.9	Affection	30.0	Affection	24.1	Affection
24.1	Respect	20.0	Young	16.7	Respect
24.1	Don't know	20.0	Respect	14.8	Superlative
11.1	Superlative	10.0	Pity	13.0	Don't know

B1		B2		B3	
27.1	Affection	44.8	Affection	38.7	Affection
16.7	Respect	20.7	Respect	19.4	Young
14.6	Smallness	17.2	Pity	12.9	Pity
14.6	Young	10.3	Young	9.7	Smallness

C1		C2	
50.0	Affection	50.0	Affection
33.3	Don't know	16.7	Superlative
16.7	Young	16.7	Respect
		16.7	Don't know

NN	
22.2	Young
22.2	Affection
22.2	DOV
11.1	Smallness

NS	
56.1	Respect
19.5	Affection
9.8	Young
4.9	Pity

MES	
35.7	DOV
35.7	Respect
14.3	Smallness
7.1	Affection

The term here displayed a strong differential percentage between the top two meanings picked, that is NS had a 65.2% differential, well above the established 30%. The NS's preferred meaning [respect] showed a high percentage of 56.1%, with the second highest being [affection] at 19.5%. The context offered for this term intended to emphasize the hierarchical status of the diminutivized noun. NS understand the diminutive as having a meaning of respect, in this case because the word has a cultural meaning and thus a cultural usage, where participants stated not using the word but knowing who would use it and what the meaning was. Participants in the oral interview stated that they understand the term as a "way of being respectful", "a way of being submissive", "I don't use it but it's respectful", "it's something an Indian would say". The NS tested showed a clear idea of the demographic group who productively uses the term *patroncito*; the term was reportedly commonly used by Latin-American indigenous people and although there were no participants from this group in the study, there was a strong consensus as to who the users of the term were and what the usage meant.

The differential percentages in L2 are all higher than the 30% established with the exception of A1 and NN. Therefore, the majority of the levels had a strong idea of what the meaning of the diminutivized form was. However, no L2 group showed an accurate selection of meaning. Even though for all L2 speakers the top connotation was not accurate to NS's, the second highest meaning chosen was [respect] (with the exception of B3, C1 or NN), which was for the NS the strongest meaning. We observe a coincidental top three meanings with different percentages for both groups. The preference that L2 speakers showed for [respect] seemed to be dependent on the context; as we see in table 3.3 the lower levels chose as their second highest meaning [respect], which could not be

due to the cultural factor as the exposure to the language is minimal for these low levels. The term was perceived by a number of L2 speakers as indicating [respect] as well. This falls into the same process seen before where the intensification of an essential meaning of the term is produced by the suffixation. If the authoritative status of the term is considered an essential feature of the meaning of the word, we can suggest that for some participants it was not the cultural knowledge of the term's meaning that explains their correct selection, but the intensification of such feature that coincides with NS's selection of a translation. The most common meaning for the L2 speakers was the [affective] meaning. Proficiency did not seem to be a positive factor when we look at accuracy as the highest levels did not choose [respect] with a high frequency.

When we look at polysemy NS have six choices for the meaning of the diminutive in this word. Here the basic levels are more flexible with the distribution of meanings; they selected more meanings than the NS and than the L2 higher levels. The high levels C1 and C2 are the only two levels with a small number of meanings picked. This term shows mixed results, where polysemy showed to be more native-like in the most proficient group NN and in the B2 group. However, NN showed no consensus whatsoever in their responses, and no accuracy as no one picked [respect]. Furthermore, the NS's choice for [respect] was a strong one with 65% differential between the top one and top two meanings. Thus, the NN 0% differential among top meanings suggests a lack of agreement on meaning as opposed to NS, whose meaning choices indicate to have both a strong main meaning and polysemous existing alternatives. The meaning [respect] was not as popular among the higher levels as it was in the lower levels. The overall results indicate that the lower levels showed more accuracy in both polysemy and

meaning selection than the higher levels. It is possible that at the lower levels they were picking [respect] more from guessing than from actually understanding the cultural connotations of the term as we see a lot more variation at the lower levels than at the higher levels. They might have been looking at the word *boss* and guessing that if it meant anything, it must mean respect because of the context and because of the word itself which connotes authority. We can suggest a tendency from lower levels to rely on the context secondary to the ascription of the diminutive core meaning of [affection].

3.4 El niño está feito. "The kid is ugly"

Table 3.4

Top Four Connotations for ***Feito*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
26.8	Softener	40.0	Affection	24.1	Softener
17.9	Smallness	30.0	Smallness	20.4	Superlative
16.1	Superlative	10.0	Softener	18.5	Smallness
14.3	Affection	10.0	DOV	9.3	Affection

B1		B2		B3	
30.6	Affection	35.7	Softener	30.0	Affection
26.5	Softener	28.6	Smallness	26.7	Smallness
18.4	Smallness	14.3	Affection	20.0	Softener
8.2	Pity	10.7	Pity	10.0	Superlative

C1		C2	
33.3	Smallness	50.0	Softener
33.3	Pity	33.3	Affection
16.7	Softener	16.7	Don't know
16.7	Don't know		

NN	
50.0	Softener
20.0	Affection
10.0	Smallness
10.0	Superlative

NS	
42.5	Softener
15.0	Pity
12.5	Affection
10.0	Superlative

MES	
78.6	Smallness
21.4	Softener

The NS group showed a strong differential percentage of 64.7% between the top meaning and the second top meaning. 42.5% of the NS's responses favor the 'a little ugly' translation which represented the [softener] meaning; this group showed more or less equal percentages on the rest of the meanings. [Pity] represented 15% of the responses and [affection] 12.5%; another meaning with high numbers was [superlative] with 10%. The meaning of the base form of the term had strong negative values; thus this adjective qualifies physical qualities as poor. In both English and Spanish, this unwanted quality immediately conveys judgment by the speaker. The context was designed to be neutral to focus on the term with the suffix.

When we look at the L2's responses we observe that A1, A3, B2, C2 and NN chose [softener] as the favorite meaning when picking its translation as "a little ugly", which lessens the strength of the meaning of the term. In Table 3.4 we observe how this term showed great variation in the distribution of meanings among every group tested, as all the meanings were picked. [Smallness] was the preferred meaning of only one level, where C1 had [pity] and [smallness] both with 33.3% of the responses. The fact that the majority of the participants viewed the diminutive as being benevolently a softener which lessens the strength of the meaning of the word indicates the power of expression of the diminutive as a softener. There was a lack of correlation with level of proficiency as [softener] was the preferred meaning in six groups from A, B and C levels. Such meaning was also the second choice for B1. The repertoire of translated terms for the adjective showed different meanings whose selection reflected personal opinions about the meaning of the term itself. The term triggers opinionative responses because of the nature of its unwanted qualities. The accurate selection of [softener] as the preferred

connotation showed a strong preference in the levels A1, C2 and NN with more than 30% of differential percentage between top meanings. Conversely, the rest of the L2 levels' preference for [softener] was not strong as it did not show differential percentages higher than 30%.

The great variation that NS showed among eight meanings, including 5% for the [don't know] option, indicated high polysemy for the suffix. A total of seven meanings were picked by the NS. L2 speakers selected several meanings in the A and B groups but the C groups showed once again a smaller number of connotations selected. Only B1 selected seven meanings for this term but again the type of meanings picked by B1 does not correspond to the meanings picked by NS. We can state that higher levels of proficiency behaved more accurately than the lower levels as C2 and NN showed strong accurate percentages when choosing [softener]. Proficiency was a determinant factor in this term when looking at accuracy, but there was no polysemous equivalent except for the B1 group.

3.5 Ese hombrecito, no tiene valor para pelear. "That man has no guts to fight"

Table 3.5

Top Four Connotations for ***Hombrecito*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
43.6	Pity	50.0	Smallness	32.7	Pity
27.3	Smallness	40.0	Pity	27.3	Smallness
14.5	Don't know	10.0	DOV	14.5	DOV
10.9	DOV			10.9	Affection

B1		B2		B3	
45.8	Smallness	53.6	Pity	38.7	Pity
27.1	Pity	17.9	Smallness	35.5	Smallness
12.5	DOV	14.3	DOV	12.9	DOV
6.3	Affection	10.7	Affection	6.5	Superlative

C1		C2	
66.7	Pity	66.7	DOV
16.7	Smallness	33.3	Smallness
16.7	DOV		

NN	
50.0	Pity
30.0	DOV
10.0	Smallness
10.0	Young

NS	
62.8	DOV
23.3	Pity
9.3	Smallness
2.3	Young

MES	
57.1	DOV
21.4	Smallness
21.4	Pity

The differential percent among NS was 60% for the top two meanings, indicating that [DOV] was a strong top meaning. In this case the context had strong influence on the meaning of the diminutive. [Pity] or [DOV] were expected to be the preferred meanings, since the meaning of the word *hombre* 'man' without the suffix under such context would have a stereotypical association with virility and braveness. Thus, it is possible that the connotations that were triggered in participants were strongly influenced by these concepts of manhood. The big difference here was seen in the meaning that prevailed as the preferred one among L2s versus NS.

Whereas 62.8% of the NS chose the [DOV] meaning, most of the L2 groups chose the [pity] meaning with the highest percentages of the results. The second highest chosen meaning for the L2 speakers was the [smallness] meaning; here levels A2 and B1 showed the majority of their responses with this meaning. "Small man" appeared to be invariably the second most popular answer for those who picked "Pitiful man" or "Insignificant man" as the preferred translation as well. This indicates that among L2 speakers the meaning of [smallness] played a significant role as a translation despite the term having strong values attached to it in the context and in the term itself, whose meaning was changed to connote specific values. The L2's decision to translate the term with the core meaning might indicate not only that the core meaning is a convenient and safe way to translate any term with the attached suffix, but also that when the term is translated as such, it adds more meaning to the sentence as a whole because the participants may be making additional assumptions the man is small and presumably unable to fight because of that. In Table 3.5 we observe that despite the difference in percentages, the selection in the meanings was similar for all the L2 groups with the

exception of C2, where the three top meanings were the same for all levels, although they were in a different order. The core meaning made sense for those L2 speakers who were influenced by the strong context where "small" can also have a pejorative connotation; it is possible that L2 speakers who picked [smallness] were interpreting "small" as "worthless", and not necessarily in the literal meaning of small in size. The strong context, the manhood associations with the term *hombre* and the similarity in the meanings associated with the diminutive (small, insignificant and pitiful) are responsible for the ascription of the top three related meanings seen for most groups.

When we look at the number of connotations selected per level and the meanings picked, NS used a total of five meanings when translating the term, unlike levels A and B where the participants used a total of seven connotations and the higher levels in C and NN speakers used a total of three connotations only. We observe that the lower levels picked more meanings than the higher levels and in this case more than the NS, too; this greater variation may suggest less certainty in their responses or a positive transfer of associations with the English concept of smallness However, the NN group had the top two meanings that NS had with [DOV] in second place at 30% and [pity] at 50%. We can see this in Table 3.5, where the results suggest that proficiency was a determiner of the accuracy of the meanings picked, as C2 and NN did show a significant choice of [DOV]. Even though most levels showed the three meanings in the lower levels [DOV] never reaches higher than 16.7% (C1), so when comparing the L2 to NS, the L2s are not sensitive to the [DOV] reading until they reach a higher level of proficiency.

3.6 Por favorcito dame un pedazo de pan. "Please give me a piece of bread"

Table 3.6

*Top Four Connotations for **Por favorcito** (in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
38.9	Smallness	50.0	Smallness	50.0	Smallness
24.1	Affection	30.0	Affection	16.1	Affection
9.3	Softener	10.0	Softener	10.7	Superlative
7.4	DOV	10.0	Distractor	8.9	Don't know

B1		B2		B3	
44.9	Smallness	55.6	Smallness	64.3	Smallness
34.7	Affection	29.6	Affection	17.9	Affection
14.3	Superlative	3.7	Softener	10.7	Respect
2.0	Softener	3.7	DOV	7.1	Superlative

C1		C2	
33.3	Affection	66.7	Affection
16.7	Smallness	33.3	Smallness
16.7	DOV		
16.7	Don't know		

NN	
25.0	Smallness
25.0	Affection
12.5	Softener
12.5	DOV

NS	
40.9	Affection
15.9	Smallness
13.6	Softener
11.4	Superlative

MES	
	N/A
	N/A
	N/A
	N/A

The differential percentage between the top two meanings in this term among NS was a strong one with 61.1%. This term showed a neutral context which triggered in 40.9% of the NS group a preference for the translation with the meaning of [affection]. The function of this interjection is marking politeness, thus the lexical meaning of the term was perceived to have a connection with [affection]. The politeness is perceived as an act of fondness as a result of the request juxtaposed to the interjection. NS's usage of this term intends to soften the request that the interjection presumes by adding the diminutive which has an [affective] effect.

However, L2 speakers' perception of the term with the suffix was predominantly favoring the [smallness] meaning. 42% of the total of participants showed a preference for the 'a little favor' translation, which not only focuses on the size of the favor being asked for as a 'small favor' but it also acts like a [softener] when expressing the size of the favor as being a 'small' one. The overall second highest choice after [smallness] was [affection], with 28.1% of all the participants. Even though the two core meanings here were favored, the meaning of [smallness] in this case has strong associations with a [softener] meaning, making the request either more polite or decreasing the size of the 'favor' to minimize the hassle associated with requests. The reduction of strength in the request already makes the politeness marker a softener for the demanded action that follows the interjection. A chain of meanings is apparent if we look closer at the meaning of the term and link the [smallness] meaning to the other meanings evoked by the translation representing [smallness]. This term did show a correlation between level of proficiency and accuracy, in that the A and the B groups showed higher percentages in the [smallness] meaning and all the two levels in C opted for [affection], which was the

most popular meaning among the NS. Both levels C1 and C2 showed a strong preference for [affection], where their differential percentage between top meanings was 50%. The NN group showed a tie with 25% for both [smallness] and [affection] which gives a 0% differential percentage and hence not a strong preference but instead an uncertain selection of meaning. However, this shows as well some consistency for the NN who behaved differently from the C groups and the NS in many other instances where the NN had favored a translation different from the most immediate levels above and below.

We can also observe with this term that the NS and the basic levels showed high numbers of connotations selected. Thus, all the connotations were chosen by the NS group, including the [distractor], and also by the A1 group. It is possible that A1 chose all the meanings because they didn't know what the term really meant, while the NS could conceive of contexts where all the meanings are plausible. However, the resemblance in these two groups' responses will be explored in the chapter 4 as the possibility of positive L1 transfer is also arguable. The number of connotations selected per level overall decreased as the level of proficiency increased among the L2 speakers. It is observed that in this case high proficiency levels did show native-like responses for the C levels but not for the NN level, where NN tied the top two meanings with the same percentages. Regarding the accuracy of the meaning picked, overall the levels in L2 speakers chose the top two meanings that NS speakers chose with a reversed order. As with polysemy accuracy worked in favor of the lower levels.

3.7 El niño está crecidito. "The kid has grown"

Table 3.7

Top Four Connotations for ***Crecidito*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
46.3	Affection	60.0	Affection	28.8	Affection
18.5	Young	20.0	Superlative	21.2	Superlative
16.7	Don't know	10.0	Young	19.2	Young
14.8	Superlative	10.0	Pity	13.5	Don't know

B1		B2		B3	
36.7	Affection	57.1	Affection	46.7	Affection
34.7	Young	21.4	Young	16.7	Don't know
22.4	Don't know	10.7	Superlative	10.0	Young
4.1	Smallness	7.1	Sarcastic	10.0	Superlative

C1		C2	
33.3	Affection	33.3	Young
16.7	Smallness	33.3	Affection
16.7	Young	33.3	Superlative
16.7	Superlative		

NN	
44.4	Affection
22.2	Young
22.2	Superlative
11.1	Pity

NS	
52.5	Superlative
22.5	Young
17.5	Affection
5.0	Sarcastic

MES	
	N/A
	N/A
	N/A
	N/A

The differential percentage between the top two meanings was 57.1% for the NS. 52.5% of the NS participants chose the [superlative] meaning and 22.5% of the participants chose [young]. The selection of the meaning [superlative] as the preferred one is due to an intensification of meaning. The enhancement of the main attribute of the diminutivized term is evident as it was strongly preferred over the rest of the meanings. This intensification of meaning has been observed before as a recurrent ascription of meaning by NS.

In contrast, all the L2 speakers preferred the [affection] meaning as the best translation with a strong differential percent of over 30% with the exception of A3, B1 and C2. [Young] was the second most preferred meaning where only level C2 showed a tie for [young], [affection] and [superlative]. For 13.5% of the L2 speakers [superlative] was the best translation representing the third most selected translation. Levels A2 and A3 chose it as their second highest meaning; furthermore, A3's selection of [superlative] was very close to number one selection [affection] and number three selection [young]. The overall results for this term show that the top three choices for both L2 speakers and NS were the same but in a different order. The L2 groups and the NS group had the same choice for the second highest meaning [young] with similar percentages in both groups. The agreement among both NS and L2 speakers regarding the top three meanings indicates a consensus on what the main connotations are for this term once the diminutive suffix is added. The meaning of [young] can be a reflection of the context, where the subject of the sentence was *niño*. If such a contextual feature had influenced 21.5% of the participants into reading the term *crecidito* as 'developed and young', then that the suffix acts to reinforce an aspect mentioned in the context. When we look at the meaning of

[superlative] the reinforcement was not on aspects of the context but on aspects of the term itself; in this way the intensification of meaning was apparent as the suffix emphasized the core meaning of the term itself: *Crecido* "developed"→ *crecidito* "very developed". A2, A3, C1, C2 and NN showed some higher responses for the meaning [superlative]; however the strength of such percentages is low over their most preferred meanings. As for the other levels there was some sensitivity to the connotation preferred by the NS; even though the usage of this term is not a standard one, the intensification of one aspect of a given term's meaning has shown to be a common strategy when ascribing meaning by participants.

NS chose a maximum of five connotations for this term, whereas with the exception of A1 and A3 and B3 most L2 levels chose fewer connotations. Even though there were more meanings chosen by NS, the differential percentage shows that there was a strong agreement among NS as to what the word meant. Only A1 had five connotations chosen. There were no strong correlations with high levels of proficiency as no pattern was found to be consistent with a decrease or an increase in proficiency.

3.8 ***Pobrecita*** *niña. "Poor girl"*

Table 3.8

Top Four Connotations for ***Pobrecita*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
33.3	Affection	60.0	Affection	25.5	Affection
16.7	Smallness	10.0	Smallness	23.6	Pity
16.7	Pity	10.0	Softener	20.0	Smallness
11.1	Don't know	10.0	Pity	12.7	Superlative

B1		B2		B3	
48.9	Affection	50.0	Affection	53.3	Affection
14.9	Smallness	20.0	Pity	23.3	Pity
12.8	Softener	16.7	Smallness	13.3	Superlative
8.5	Pity	3.3	Softener	10.0	Smallness

C1		C2	
33.3	Affection	66.7	Affection
33.3	Pity	16.7	Softener
16.7	Smallness	16.7	Pity
16.7	Superlative		

NN	
37.5	Affection
37.5	Pity
12.5	Smallness
12.5	Superlative

NS	
47.5	Pity
27.5	Affection
12.5	Smallness
2.5	Softener

MES	
57.1	Pity
21.4	Smallness
21.4	Pity

The differential percentage in this term for NS showed to be 42.1% between the meaning of [pity] and [affection]. [Pity], with 47.5% of the participants' responses, was the preferred meaning and the second highest percentage in the NS group was the [affective] meaning with 27.5%. Even though the context selected was designed neutrally to convey as little as possible through it, leaving the diminutive term to carry most associations, the term *pobrecita* "poor thing" evokes strong meanings related to sympathy or feelings of compassion. This adjective conveys an attitude of pity from the speaker where its usage is a commentary on feelings of sympathy. The context was designed to be neutral so the word itself would do all the work at triggering meaning. Even though the sentence included the term *niña*, the [young] choice was not provided in order to avoid all responses going to that translation. No participants added the connotation of [young] in the option [other].

For this term the overall connotation preferred by all L2 speakers was the meaning of [affection]. This meaning showed the highest numbers for every level, except for [pity] for levels C1 and NN which had the same percentages for both meanings. Participants from both L2 groups and NS responded in similar ways as the two favored meanings were [pity] and [affection]. When looking at the accuracy of meaning selection this term showed some correlation to proficiency as C1 and NN had equally rated [affection] and [pity]; thus even though the meaning of [pity] was not strongly chosen over a second top meaning, as in the case of the NS, the percentage was higher than in any other level. Every level of the L2 speakers showed [pity] in their range of selected meanings but none showed to have picked it with a high number. The selection of [affection] as the prevalent meaning among L2 speakers showed an inclination for the

core meaning [affection] when a neutral context was given. It was also seen that most L2 speakers showed as a second choice to either emphasize the pity aspect of 'poor', as the adjective both in English and in Spanish can also solely convey pity. L2 speakers who did not chose [affection] or [pity] chose the core meaning [smallness].

In this case we see again the NS showing the largest number of meanings selected among all the participants. Seven meanings were chosen by NS while no group in the L2s had as many selected. As the higher levels in L2 showed less variation, the L2 groups with most meanings selected were A1, B1 and B2 with six meanings. Polysemy was observed in one low level and in two of the mid levels. No definite conclusions about proficiency can be drawn with respect to polysemy as the number of meanings selected was not consistently dependent on the level of proficiency in this case.

3.9 ¿Dónde está el padrecito? "Where is the priest?"

Table 3.9

Top Four Connotations for ***Padrecito*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
40.7	Respect	30.0	Smallness	32.1	Smallness
20.4	Don't know	30.0	DOV	24.5	Respect
18.5	Smallness	20.0	Respect	22.6	Don't know
9.3	DOV	10.0	Young	17.0	DOV

B1		B2		B3	
41.7	Smallness	39.3	Smallness	48.1	Smallness
27.1	Respect	32.1	Respect	25.9	Respect
10.4	Don't know	14.3	DOV	11.1	Affection
8.3	Distractor	7.1	Affection	11.1	Don't know

C1		C2	
33.3	Smallness	50.0	Respect
33.3	Affection	16.7	Smallness
33.3	Pity	16.7	Affection
		16.7	DOV

NN	
33.3	Smallness
33.3	DOV
16.7	Affection
8.3	Pity

NS	
51.2	Respect
29.3	Affection
7.3	Smallness
4.9	Distractor

MES	
50	Smallness
28.6	DOV
21.4	Distractor

The differential percentage of the top two meanings among NS in this term was 42%. The context of this sentence was neutral, with a question format that does not convey any attitudes from the speaker. NS showed a first preference for [respect] and a second preference for [affection] with 29.3% of the responses. The strong religious authoritative connotations that the meaning of the term conveys was not lost on the NS as the use of the diminutive did not lessen the value of respect that the word *priest* expresses; on the contrary it enhanced it as [respect] was the favored meaning. This term was selected to test the meaning of [respect], which is productive among Spanish speakers. In previous research an 'honorific' meaning was found in the Aztec language Nahuatl. The language of the Aztecs would denote respect to their superiors with the use of a diminutive suffix attached to nouns (Tuggy, 1991).

> El sufijo ***-tzin*** *diminutivo/honorífico,* hay varios afijos que suelen usarse en sustantivos Uno que es especialmente común e importante es ***-tzin***, que tiene dos significados: *diminutivo* y *honorífico*. Cuando se usa con su sentido diminutivo, a veces se puede traducir por los diminutivos españoles, como ***-ito***, o ***-illo***. Cuando es honorífico implica un respeto del que habla hacia la persona o cosa de que se habla. El contexto indica cuál de los dos significados es más apropiado."(Tuggy 2.6)

> "The suffix **–tzin** *diminutive/honorific*; there are several affixes that are commonly used in nouns. An especially common and important one is **-tzin,** which has two meanings, *diminutive* and *honorific*. When it's used with a diminutive meaning, sometimes it can be translated with the

Spanish diminutives **–ito** or **–illo**. When the honorific meanings are used it implies respect from the speaker to the person or thing that is talked about. The context indicates which one of the two meanings is more appropriate." (my translation).

Spanish-speaking Mexican indigenous people use the term *padrecito* possibly to show respect towards priests since they are strong authoritative figures in the rural areas of the country. It is possible that this usage is restricted to Mexican Spanish, due to the possible Nahuatl lexical influence into Mexican Spanish. However, this study showed that 15 out of 18 non-Mexican participants chose the [respect] meaning when the diminutive was attached to the term "priest". In an oral interview, an Argentinean participant who picked the [respect] translation stated that he would not use the term with the diminutive affix but that in his country there were people that would. He was then asked to describe who would use the term *padrecito* with such a 'respectful' reading. The participant answered "people that work for other people, poor people"; he also stated that these people were usually "more indigenous". The overall results indicating that the meaning of [respect] was the most favored by a majority of NS departs from the idea of a possible borrowing from Nahuatl to Mexican Spanish in that most NS, whether Mexican or not, considered the meaning of [respect] in this specific term being used by a certain demographic group.

The majority of the L2 groups chose [smallness] to be the best translation for this term. The groups A2, B1, B2, B3, C1 and NN chose "little priest" as their first pick when translating the term. The second favored meaning was [respect], where A1 and C2 chose it as the best possible translation. The third most frequent meaning chosen was [DOV]

with two groups choosing as the best translation "unimportant priest" (A2 and NN). The usage of the diminutive as a register device where certain Spanish-speakers use it to be respectful is a notion to consider here where [DOV] was also the preferred translation for two groups (A2 and NN) and also chosen by 10% of all the participants overall. L2 speakers in general seem to have some awareness of the [respect] connotation of the diminutive. However, such awareness suggests again a possible intensification of meaning enhancing the respectful attributes of 'priest' or a possible L1 transfer which would mean the inclusion of the [respect] association with the diminutive for L2 speakers. The chain of meanings associated with the diminutive in Spanish speakers includes the meaning of [respect] and it is possible that English speakers' chain have it too. The [DOV] meaning was chosen by as many participants as the [affection] meaning, the latter being selected by 10.5% of the participants. The negative values of diminution perceived by certain participants could be stemming from the very meaning of the term itself, where its strong authoritative connotations seemed reduced when attaching a diminutive affix to the word. The [respect] meaning that the word itself carries without the suffix is perceived to be lost when attaching an affix that in essence reduces entities. The lack of respect in turn is perceived when attaching an affix of diminution to a religious title among the L2 speakers who may have tried to rationalize the use of the diminutive. There is no mention of the [respect] use in Taylor's typological categories; however, this "honorific" or [respect] meaning also falls into an [intensifier] meaning where it connotes the intensification of a term's meaning through metonymic extension by reducing the meaning to the essence of the salient meaning. The L2 speakers' results

were varied but a consistent preference for the meaning [respect] was shown, particularly at the low levels.

The amount of connotations picked by the NS was seven; this number is high and so is the differential percentage of 42.9%. This case showed both a strong preferred meaning and a polysemous usage in NS. None of the L2 groups showed to have seven connotations or more; the only group that showed a high number was A1 with six connotations. Not only was A1 the only group which approached the number of connotations picked by NS, but also the accuracy shown by such group had a strong differential percentage of 50% between top meanings. This indicates that A1 and C2 were the most native-like in accuracy but A1 was also the most native-like when it came to number of meanings chosen. Proficiency was not a clear factor as a determiner of native-likeness, although there is a gradual increase in preference for [respect] and except for C1 and NN the favored meaning among the L2 speakers was the core meaning of [smallness].

3.10 Eres muy chistosito. "You are very funny"

Table 3.10

Top Four Connotations for ***Chistosito*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
42.6	Affection	41.2	Affection	32.1	Affection
27.8	Superlative	41.2	Softener	26.4	Superlative
11.1	Don't know	11.8	Superlative	17.0	Softener
7.4	Softener	5.9	Pity	9.4	Don't know

B1		B2		B3	
61.7	Affection	60.0	Affection	59.3	Affection
12.8	Smallness	16.7	Superlative	18.5	Smallness
12.8	Superlative	6.7	Smallness	11.1	Softener
6.4	Softener	6.7	Softener	11.1	Superlative

C1		C2	
50.0	Affection	33.3	Superlative
16.7	Softener	16.7	Affection
16.7	DOV	16.7	Softener
16.7	Don't know	16.7	DOV

NN	
60.0	Affection
20.0	Superlative
10.0	Softener
10.0	DOV

NS	
42.9	Sarcastic
28.6	DOV
11.9	Superlative
7.1	Affection

MES	
	N/A
	N/A
	N/A
	N/A

This term was embedded in a context with few other elements to allow for the inclusion of eight alternatives as possible translations. The differential percentage for NS was 33.3%. When we look at the NS group we observe that the preferred meaning was, with 42.9 %, the meaning of [sarcasm], and with 28.6%, the meaning of [DOV]. NS saw as the best option the 'not funny at all' translation with a considerably high percentage; this answer was the highest among the six other meanings selected. These results strongly indicate that the term has gone through a lexicalization process where 71.5% of the NS group perceived it as having negative values, opposite to what the term stands for. The remaining 28.5 % for NS was divided between [superlative] with 11.9%, [pity] with 7.1%, [affection] with 7.1% and 2.4% for [Smallness]. Given that the context did not intend to elicit specific meanings, the negative values attached to a word with a positive denotation implies the strength that the diminutive's negative meanings added for this word.

The role that context plays in the results is crucial; however, this term had no strong context which shows possible lexicalization for NS. The context was very neutral and it did not add a specific meaning to the term *chistoso* "funny"; the *muy* "very" adverb intensifies whatever meanings participants ascribed to *chistosito* but does not add a particular connotation. I suggest the term itself having strong negative connotations when the diminutive is added, which caused NS to perceive it as the opposite of what it denotes; in this way the term shows a tendency to be lexicalized as the meaning is not compositional anymore from either the context or the suffixation.

The results showed [affection] among all L2 speakers, with the exception of C2 which picked [superlative] as the preferred meaning. [Affection] has been a common response seen before throughout this study in cases with no strong contextual elements. This is unlike every other term discussed previously where the favorite meaning for NS is commonly the favorite or second favorite for L2's as well. Given that the adjective has a strong positive connotation, the associated positive meanings that were offered were not the favored ones by NS but conversely were chosen by L2 speakers who not only perceived the diminutive as being [affective] but 18% perceived it as an intensifier (A1, A3, B2 and NN chose [superlative] as their second best answer), which strengthens the positive connotation already denoted by the term without the suffix. We can conclude that L2 speakers are not yet aware of the lexicalized meaning of the diminutive in this case; the [sarcastic] meaning accounted for only 1% of their answers. This indicates that there are some cultural factors in the process of changing the meaning of a word once a suffix is attached as the clear difference in percentages show that only for the NS was the association negative. These factors are absent from L2 speakers for whom the default selection was the core predominant meaning of [affection].

The number of connotations chosen per level did not show a clear correlation with the level of proficiency. NS chose six meanings in total, and only A1 coincides with the number of meanings picked. Although high levels of proficiency showed a lower number of meanings than the number of meanings picked by the NS there is no clear correlation with proficiency when looking at the number of meanings picked. Levels A3 and B2 showed more meanings picked than the NS. In this case it is possible to conclude that high proficiency did not seen to have any positive impact on the knowledge of the

meaning of this term as neither polysemy was found in higher levels nor accuracy of meaning selection was found.

3.11¿Dónde está tu noviecita? "Where is your girlfriend?

Table 3.11

Top Four Connotations for ***Noviecita*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
45.5	Smallness	66.7	Affection	63.5	Smallness
34.5	Affection	22.2	Smallness	19.2	Affection
14.5	Don't know	11.1	Young	11.5	Don't know
1.8	DOV			3.8	Respect

B1		B2		B3	
51.1	Affection	71.4	Affection	40.6	Smallness
40.4	Smallness	28.6	Smallness	37.5	Affection
6.4	Don't know			6.3	Pity
2.1	Distractor			6.3	Respect

C1		C2	
66.7	Affection	66.7	Affection
33.3	Smallness	33.3	Smallness

NN	
44.4	Smallness
44.4	Affection
11.1	DOV

NS	
46.5	DOV
32.6	Affection
9.3	Smallness
7.0	Young

MES	
50	Affection
28.6	DOV
21.4	Smallness

The differential percentage of 30% between this term's top meaning and the second top meaning complies with the minimum established to determine a strong top meaning chosen by NS. The NS group chose the meaning of [DOV] 47% of the time. These results suggest that the word *noviecita* has lexicalized negative connotations for native speakers, even though there was nothing negative in the context of the sentence. In the interviews for this word one male participant from Argentina explained that anybody in his country would pick that meaning because "it is like making fun of the guy because he has a girlfriend". Another NS from Chile explained that the reason why he saw it as negative was because "it just sounded like she is mean or controlling". Clearly the context does not imply any of these ideas; the term with the attached diminutive seems to be going through a lexicalization process where NS perceive the term with a negative connotation. The notion of a relationship commitment can be perceived as a restraining one; it is not surprising that people would posit a negative value to a word that has strong social associations with freedom restriction for men. Both women and men showed negative values for the term *noviecita.* Out of the fourteen men tested in the NS group 57% of them answered with the [DOV] response and out of the twenty-three women tested in the same group 47.8% answered with the [DOV] response. Thus almost half of both groups answered in favor of the [DOV] response, with the meaning [lack of worth] as opposed [depreciation], which was also offered as an option. While women as well showed negative values towards the term, the process of lexicalization of the term with the diminutive is not yet a completed operation, since the [affective] meaning was the second most preferred connotation with 32.6% of responses in the NS. This high percentage

includes at times the same participants responding to both options; thus one speaker could have both connotations although they are contradictory.

The NS were the only one of the ten groups tested who strongly opted for the meaning [DOV]; the rest of the levels had an inclination for [affection] and secondly for [smallness]. This term showed that the majority of the L2 levels preferred the [affection] meaning. The six levels that chose this meaning were A2, B2, B3, C1, C2 and NN with the option *cute girlfriend.* The second most preferred meaning was, with four levels, the meaning of [smallness]. This meaning was chosen by A1, A3, B3 and NN. The preference for these did not show a correlation with the level of proficiency, in that all L2 levels preferred these two meanings and seemed insensitive to the [DOV] connotation. We observe that in this case the L2 speakers' perception was in general not native-like and that there was no correlation seen with level of proficiency in that even NN speakers picked [affection] first.

A total of five connotations were picked by the NS; the narrow selection of meanings indicates less consensus in this group about what the term connotes than in the L2 speaker groups. The higher levels in the C group only had two connotations picked and the NN had three. The fact that the two main meanings showed high percentages is indicative of the less polysemous nature of this term for the L2 speakers. Although there was no correlation with proficiency for the accuracy of selection based on the native-like responses, the NN was the only group who had its third choice as the [DOV] meaning. The analysis of this term suggests low polysemy for the L2 speakers and low accuracy in meaning selection of the preferred NS meaning, where only the NN picked with 11% the

[DOV] meaning. Most L2s picked the second most preferred native-like meaning, which was a safe guess as it was the core meaning [affection].

3.12 La lluviecita duró ocho horas. "The rain lasted eight hours"

Table 3.12

Top Four Connotations for ***Lluviecita*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
33.3	Softener RS	70.0	Softener RS	43.6	Softener RS
22.2	Don't know	20.0	Don't know	18.2	Don't know
13.0	Approximation	10.0	Smallness	14.5	Superlative
11.1	Superlative			7.3	approximation

B1		B2		B3	
56.4	Softener RS	75.0	Softener RS	70.0	Softener RS
14.5	Affection	10.7	Affection	10.0	Affection
10.9	Don't know	7.1	Smallness	6.7	Smallness
5.5	Smallness	3.6	SDT	3.3	SDT

C1		C2	
50.0	Softener RS	66.7	Softener RS
33.3	Affection	33.3	Pity
16.7	Don't know		

NN	
85.7	Softener RS
14.3	DOV

NS	
41.5	DOV
34.1	Softener RS
14.6	Approximation
2.4	Affection

MES	
42.9	Softener RS
35.7	Affection
7.1	Smallness
7.1	SDT

This term did not show a strong agreement among NS for the preferred meaning as the differential percent was less than 30%. In this case the top two connoptations had a 7.3% difference between them. The majority of NS showed preference for the [DOV] meaning with the 'stupid rain' translation. It was noted that 41.5% of the NS chose [DOV] as the main meaning for *lluviecita.* Given that 34.1% of NS also chose the [RS] meaning as the preferred one, it is deduced that the [RS] was a stronger connotation over the other softener meaning [SDT]. The Spanish diminutive *–ita/-ito* is often used to connote reduction in time and the term used here did trigger that meaning in some of the NS and the L2 groups; however, the percentages were low. The low numbers for this meaning are likely the result of the context, where the sentence stated the length of time with respect to the *rain* event. The appearance of any percentage at all despite such a context indicates a clear existence of the meaning [SDT], which prevailed in some participants over the contextual weight.

This term showed a unanimous agreement for the [RS] meaning among all the L2 speakers of Spanish, showing the highest percentage to be for the translation 'light rain'. On the other hand, all of the L2 groups showed a noticeably high percentage in the [softener] meaning, indicating less polysemous activity for this noun with the attached diminutive. The second meaning with highest percentages among L2 speakers was [don't know], and the third one was [affection] with four groups. The high percentage on the [don't know] corresponded to the three lowest levels of proficiency, which also contain the majority of participants. The participants in all groups in B and C1, who did not choose [softener] as the best translation, chose [affection] as the best translation whereas

the less proficient groups in A had the [don't know] option. Conversely, NS's second highest ranking was for the [softener] meaning and throughout all the meanings the distribution of the meaning [softener] was invariably the strongest for all L2 speakers. The semantics of the term *lluvia* 'rain' provoked in the majority of L2 participants a metaphoric extension from the realm of size to the realm of quantity; thus the "light rain" translation was preferred over the other meanings with a consensus among the L2speakers since the conceptualization of the rest of the meanings was not natural enough for them. The high percentages on the [RS] strongly indicate that the context helped to overrule one competitive meaning and that without it, the decision of what the best translation was became safe.

NS also differed with the L2 speakers in that their answers had the most variation among meanings; thus the distribution of the percentages was more balanced among the rest of the meanings. The total of meanings picked by the NS was seven, where only B1 had seven meanings selected as well and A1 and A3 had eight. Contrary to the low levels where high polysemy was shown, the high levels showed two meanings picked only. This indicates that in this term the higher levels were more accurate in meaning selection but did not show the ability to ascribe other meanings that are as well acceptable by NS. This term showed a lot of variation from the NS and such variation is established to be the accurate native-like way to ascribe meaning to *lluviecita*. Such variation was seen in lower levels.

3.13 El cadillac es un cochecito caro. "The cadillac is an expensive car"

Table 3.13

Top Four Connotations for ***Cochecito*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
21.8	Superlative	50.0	Smallness	30.2	Smallness
18.2	Respect	20.0	Don't know	17.0	Affection
18.2	Don't know	10.0	Superlative	15.1	Don't know
14.5	Affection	10.0	Respect	13.2	Superlative

B1		B2		B3	
28.0	Smallness	42.9	Affection	39.3	Affection
26.0	Affection	32.1	Smallness	21.4	Smallness
14.0	Don't know	7.1	Superlative	10.7	Young/New
12.0	Respect	3.6	Young/New	7.1	DOV

C1		C2	
66.7	Affection	42.9	Respect
16.7	Smallness	14.3	Affection
16.7	Distractor	14.3	Superlative
		14.3	Don't know

NN	
50.0	Smallness
37.5	Affection
12.5	Respect

NS	
28.6	Respect
23.8	Superlative
21.4	Affection
16.7	Smallness

MES	
42.9	Superlative
35.7	Respect
14.3	Smallness
7.1	Don't know

28.6% of the NS group showed as the highest preferred translation the meaning of [respect]. There was not a strong differential percentage between the top two meanings. Given that 16.7% was the differential, there was a noticeable even distribution of responses for this term for the NS where four other meanings showed high percentages. The [superlative] meaning obtained 23.8% of the responses, showing the second most frequent translation among NS. The even distribution among the NS indicates the two higher percentages focused the interpretation of the meaning on the contextual features given. The contextual features denoting a larger size car did not confuse the participants when reading the diminutivized term, because the interpretation of the term posed no difficulty or contradiction as the characteristics of the car were made clear in the context and thus emphasis on such characteristics was created with the usage of the diminutive. The context of the sentence had been designed to avoid the possible dismissing of certain meanings; in such a way the name of the car was mentioned to make sure [superlative] was not dismissed, as Cadillacs are well known for their large size. Also, the adjective *caro* "expensive" was included in the sentence to assure the inclusion of the meaning [respect]. NS participants reacted to these two contextual hints and that possibly caused such responses.

The highest response throughout the L2s was [smallness], with four levels choosing it as their preferred translation. A2, A3, B1 and NN showed a consistent preference for the [smallness] meaning, whereas intermediate levels like B2, B3 and C1 opted for [affection]. It can be observed that A1 and NS share the same top two meanings but in reverse order. Here [superlative] is A1's top answer and NS's top second. In contrast, the rest of the L2 speakers, with the exception of the A1 and C2, did not react to

the context; thus they showed a consistent preference for the core meanings [smallness] and [affection]. The previously seen native-like judgment that A1 has shown is surprising as being the level with the least proficiency and exposure. In chapter four the possible reasons will be explored. Looking at the distractor column, we observe that some levels opted for the option of *fast car*, whose purpose in the test was to contain a wrong connotation. Even though the distractor meaning did not have high results, it did have more hits than [Pity] and as many as the [DOV] with 4.2%. The distractor meaning [fast] can be interpreted as a positive value meaning that would fall into the [respect] meaning or even an [augmentation of value] meaning. The distractor is a poor choice as a wrong connotation since the progression of meaning through the chain of associations could be easily tracked down to an existing meaning. On the other hand, the fact that the distractor here and in other sentences is being picked by a significant number of participants indicates a wider range of meaning for the diminutive in some participants, where the addition of meaning to the diminutive is more unpredictable than what it has been already speculated as participants added meaning outside the researched chain of meanings. The admission of a distractor as part of a meaning repertoire shows a very flexible usage for the suffix. Such phenomenon is common in NS who frequently widen their meaning repertoire as their experiential frame grows. The restrictive usage of core meanings is shown by all L2 speakers except for A1 and C2, whose choice of meaning is potentially caused by the context. The accurate selection of meanings by such groups reflects a native-like ascription of meaning where the combination of context and conceptual repertoire of meanings associated with the diminutive was correctly assigned. The A1

level perhaps shows positive transfer and the C2 level shows proficiency being a positive factor in the selection of meanings. Such notions will be discussed further in chapter four.

Five meanings were picked by the NS, which in this case is lower than the majority of the A groups and the B groups as most of them picked seven meanings (except for A2 who picked four). The correlation with proficiency again looks at the consistent low number of meanings picked by the highest levels, where C1 picked three, C2 picked four and NN three. Low proficiency works in favor of polysemy but exceeds the number of meanings picked by the NS, thus suggesting either less certainty of the meaning of the diminutive or a broader repertoire of meanings associated with the diminutive. The high number of meanings picked by the low and intermediate levels versus the low number picked by the high levels will be further discussed in chapter four.

3.14 Ahorita te hablo por teléfono. "I'll call you now on the phone"

Table 3.14

*Top Four Connotations for **Ahorita** (in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
29.1	Superlative	40.0	Affection	34.5	Superlative
23.6	Affection	30.0	Superlative	20.7	Softener
16.4	Don't know	10.0	Softener	15.5	Affection
12.7	Softener	10.0	Approximation	15.5	Don't know

B1		B2		B3	
27.1	Superlative	28.6	Superlative	44.8	Superlative
20.8	Affection	21.4	Affection	17.2	Affection
20.8	Softener	21.4	Softener	17.2	Softener
18.8	Approximation	17.9	Approximation	6.9	DOV

C1		C2	
42.9	Superlative	50.0	Superlative
28.6	Affection	33.3	Approximation
14.3	Softener	16.7	Sarcastic
14.3	DOV		

NN	
55.6	Approximation
22.2	Affection
22.2	Superlative
0.0	Softener

NS	
25.5	Superlative
21.6	Affection
21.6	Softener
15.7	Sarcastic

MES	
	N/A
	N/A
	N/A
	N/A

The differential percentage among NS between the top two meanings was for this term a low one with 15.4%. The context used in the sentence for this term was created to make sure there was no avoidance of some meanings. As well, the translation of the sentence was constructed in the future to include the [apologetic] meaning. The translation that appeared to have the highest percentage for the NS was the [superlative] meaning; 25.5% of the NS viewed the 'right now' option as intensifying the temporal meaning of the adverb in a way that the time connoted is shortened. The intensification of meaning worked to focus the immediateness of time. The essence of this time adverb emphasizes the present time that it is referring to, so this currentness is intensified by the English "right" and the Spanish diminutive. NS showed a tie in percentages between [affection] and [softener] with both meanings having 21.6% of the participants' responses. The [sarcastic] and [approximation] meanings showed 15.7% and 13.7% respectively. Considering that this is a term with no strong preference, the meanings showed high percentages for 'in a while' and 'in a second' translations.

For the L2 speakers (except A2 and NN), despite the translation of the sentence using the future sense, the [superlative] meaning was also the best translation. The overall percentage of the [superlative] meaning was 31%, where only A2 and NN chose [affection] and [approximation] respectively (which were the second and third most preferred meanings). The meaning [superlative] had the highest rate of the responses by most groups but the overall distribution of the rest of the selected meanings was balanced with similar percentages. The overall responses from the L2 participants were native-like as they chose the [superlative] meaning, except for the A2 and the NN groups.

Ahorita shows clear polysemy where some levels show antonymic meanings that a number of participants found acceptable. Despite the use of the future tense to indicate a possible "near later" reading regarding when the call is going to be made, the meanings that allude to this notion 'in a sec' and 'in a while' were not in fact the most favored translations. Both translations 'right now' [superlative] and 'now affectionate' [affectionate] maintain the currentness of 'now', unlike the other two meanings previously mentioned, [approximation] and [sarcastic], which both emphasize the postponement of the action. The choice of meaning indicates that the lexical meaning of the adverb was stronger than the context which showed temporal future of the event. We also observed that with respect polysemy once again the higher levels C1, C2 and NN chose the least meanings and the lower levels chose a number of meanings that is more native-like. The C levels that chose the [superlative] meaning as the preferred meaning had high differential percentages between top meanings for this sentence as opposed to the NS, A1, A3, B1 and B2 groups which had low differential percentages between top meanings and had the accurate meaning selection of [superlative]. A constant pattern is shown where the higher levels select fewer meanings and, with higher percentages, one preferred meaning. This will be further explained in the last chapter of this work.

3.15 Los inditos venden dulces. "The Indians sell candy"

Table 3.15

Top Four Connotations for ***Inditos*** *(in %)*

A1		A2		A3	
27.8	Young	20.0	Smallness	33.3	Smallness
25.9	Don't know	20.0	Young	25.9	Young
16.7	Smallness	20.0	Pity	22.2	Don't know
13.0	Respect	20.0	Don't know	7.4	DOV

B1		B2		B3	
41.7	Young	53.3	Young	60.7	Young
31.3	Smallness	20.0	Smallness	21.4	Smallness
10.4	Don't know	10.0	Respect	10.7	Affection
6.3	Respect	6.7	Don't know	3.6	Pity

C1		C2	
66.7	Young	30.0	Smallness
16.7	Smallness	30.0	Young
16.7	Don't know	30.0	Pity
		10.0	DOV

NN	
30.0	Smallness
30.0	Young
20.0	Pity
10.0	DOV

NS	
27.5	Young
27.5	Pity
20.0	Affection
12.5	Respect

MES	
42.9	Young
14.3	Smallness
14.3	Affection
14.3	Pity

The differential percentage among NS in this term was zero, which means that there was no strong meaning salient for the NS and thus uncertainty about its meaning. This term showed a neutral context in order to focus on the cultural aspects of the term. An even tie between the [young] meaning and the [pity] meaning at 27.5% of the participants' responses was shown. Close to those numbers the meaning of [affection] represented 20% of the responses. The diminutive was used as a means of expression of opinions regarding a social group. The tie between [young] and [pity] reflects two positions taken by the majority of the NS participants where the selection of [young] shows a neutral unemotional perception of the term tested. However, the selection of the other meaning, [pity], reflects an emotional opinion. The dismissal of the meaning of [smallness] by the NS is indicative of the expressiveness of the suffix as 0% considered this core meaning of the diminutive.

In the case of the L2 speakers the selection of meanings remains more neutral as the favored meanings were the core meaning of [smallness] and the meaning of [young], which do not express an emotional opinion; the meaning of [young] overall showed the highest response with 37.6%. L2 speakers favored [smallness] with 25.2%, while 6.4% opted for [pity] and 6.8% for [respect]. All the levels selected one of the two meanings chosen by the NS. The meaning [young] was selected with the highest percentages as the preferred meaning in all levels with the exception of A3. However, A2 and C2 chose the top two meanings that NS chose; [young] and [pity] were chosen with the same 0% differential percentages by the three groups A2, C2 and NS. The culturally charged context created to make the participant aware of social and cultural knowledge did a good job in soliciting an opinionated response, which informs us as to what the general L2

speaker perceives the diminutive to express. Unlike the meanings of [affection], [young], and [respect] the meaning of [pity] arguably represents a positive feeling since the concept vacillates between feelings of sympathy and feelings of condescension. Thus, further research is needed to determine the emotion connoted by the meaning of [pity] perceived by the majority of the NS and by a number of L2 speakers of the levels A2 and C2. This case requires special analysis as the meaning of the term *indio* shows cultural richness, thus with the usage of a suffix we can observe what participants express beyond the denotation. The connotations that this term provoke in participants are intensified by the suffix in that the negative or positive meaning connoted by the term is emphasized with the usage of the suffix. The meaning of [respect] and [DOV] are considered as well by participants from both L2 and NS; in this case extreme opposite perceptions were shown by the addition of the suffix. This opposite perception in meanings has been seen in previous sentences among all groups; in this case, NS showed 12.5% for the [respect] meaning and 2.5% for the [DOV] meaning. "Respectable Indians" and "Stupid Indians" are quite opposite to each other in meaning; nonetheless both were chosen as best translations by some participants. The suffixation is understood as diminishing or as respectful by some participants. Whether respectful or diminishing, L2 speakers from levels as low as A1 perceived the suffix to be a medium to connote more than [smallness].

The total number of meaning selected by NS was five where only A2 and B3 picked the same amount. Polysemy was shown in the lower levels which picked more meanings and less polysemy was shown in higher levels where fewer than five meanings were picked. More than one meaning is predominant since no meaning predominated

over the rest; as it was mentioned before that A2, C2 and NN had a zero differential between meanings. The role of proficiency is hard to determine; when looking at accuracy A2 and C2 were both the closest to the NS as those two groups chose both NS's preferred meanings. However, when looking at polysemy A2 and B3 had five connotations selected. Thus A2 appears to be a very accurate group since four of the five meanings selected were the same as the NS's and they also selected the top two preferred meanings with a 0% differential between them.

In this chapter I looked at the results for each individual word, and a comparison between the L2 responses and the NS responses was made. A differential percentage was established to set strong and weak responses. It was observed in Figure 2.2 of chapter 2 that NS found eleven of the fifteen diminutivized terms to have a strong meaning. After the established NS strong meanings were set the comparison per word was provided. It was found that generally L2 speakers chose [affection] as the preferred meaning whereas the NS only chose it once. L2 speakers coincided four times with the NS responses and hence eleven times they did not coincide with the NS responses. The coincidental meanings will be explored further on in the next chapter as to establish the levels which showed accuracy, contrasting them to the levels that did not show accurate responses. The next chapter will look at the overall results per level to find correlations with proficiency. Chapter four will answer the three research questions in light of the findings of the analysis. Conclusions will be drawn from summary tables with respect to accuracy in meaning selection and polysemy. Both will be looked at for each level in order to make some general statements about L2 performance with the diminutive. Finally the

chapter will deal with the limitations of the study, directions for future research and the implications for teaching.

Chapter 4

Discussion of results

In this section the findings of the study will be described according to each of the research questions listed in chapter one. General statements will be drawn with respect to the levels of proficiency. The three research questions will be answered with the findings of the study. Summary tables will illustrate the general findings for accuracy in meaning selection and in polysemy. The first question—what meanings do L2 learners associate with the Spanish diminutive?—deals with the issue of meaning centrality. The meaning of [affection] found in the previous chapter as the most common meaning perceived is further investigated in this chapter from the perspective of centrality as both [affection] and [smallness] show to be the preferred meanings by L2 speakers. The second and third research questions will be answered according to each level's accurate responses in order to draw conclusions with respect to proficiency. In this manner tables showing summary information on the responses of L2 speakers will illustrate the results. The last sections on this chapter will discuss the limitations of the study, directions for further research, and the implications for teaching.

4.1 What meanings do L2 learners associate with the Spanish diminutive?

Such a question has not yet been examined for Spanish L2 learners, as studies about the Spanish diminutive meanings in NS are not extensive. There is no hypothesis provided with respect to the meanings L2 learners associate with the Spanish diminutive; therefore this first question provides a descriptive answer of what was found in the data for this study. In the next table the variation in meaning selection by L2 learners is provided without looking at the specific terms but just at the levels and the meanings

provided as a whole. The percentages shown in this and all following tables represent the top choices only. The table also shows NS's percentages for all the meanings given in the test to make a comparison between L2 and NS. The last column presents the percentages for MES to explore the possibility of L1 transfer.

Table 4.16

Summary in percentages of the meanings chosen by all groups tested

	A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	NN	NS	MES
Smallness	17.8	21.2	24.8	25.6	21.3	26.5	17.6	15.8	20.6	10.4	29.5
Young	4.8	4.5	4.8	6.6	6.8	7.1	6.6	6.3	6.6	4.7	3.8
Affection	24.1	29.5	18.3	29.5	34.4	29.2	31.9	27.4	23.5	19.1	21.8
Softener	6.5	11.5	8.0	8.8	9.6	8.0	6.6	9.5	9.6	7.9	5.8
SDT	0.1	-	-	0.4	0.2	0.2	-	-	-	0.2	0.6
Pity	5.5	6.4	5.4	3.8	7.5	7.3	11.0	6.3	9.6	9.1	8.3
DOV	3.9	7.1	4.9	3.1	3.3	2.7	4.4	7.4	10.3	14.3	15.4
Approximation	1.3	0.6	0.9	1.5	1.2	0.5	-	2.1	3.7	2.1	-
Superlative	10.5	6.4	12.8	6.0	5.9	8.9	8.8	11.6	11.0	14.8	7.7
Sarcastic	0.6	0.6	1.0	-	0.7	0.2	-	1.1	-	4.7	-
Respect	8.1	5.8	5.2	5.5	6.1	5.3	2.2	8.4	1.5	10.8	3.2
Don't know	15.8	5.1	12.9	8.2	2.1	3.2	8.8	3.2	3.7	1.3	1.9
Distractor	0.9	1.3	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	2.2	1.1	-	0.8	1.9

We see that in all the levels in L2, there is a preference for the central meanings [affection] and [smallness], where [affection] showed to be the highest rated and [smallness] was the second highest. NS show less preference for the central meanings; nonetheless the highest rated meaning was [affection] as well. NS's second highest percentage goes to [DOV] and third to [superlative]. Few levels chose [SDT], and

[approximation] and [sarcastic] were absent from some L2 levels as well. This is not surprising because the same meanings showed the lowest numbers for the NS group, so [SDT], [approximation] and [sarcastic] seem to be peripheral meanings of the diminutive.

The results of the test showed a clear tendency for the speakers to use certain meanings more than others. However, the selection of meanings was not always strong in numbers for one certain meaning. The less than 1% response in [SDT] was not necessarily indicative of the lack of such meaning. The test possibly did not offer a good context or an appropriate term to verify the usage of a certain meaning in the NS and thus the L2 speakers did not have the opportunity either to use such meaning. The nature of the term and the context where the term was embedded were higher determinants of the results.

The preferences are more spread out in the A levels and the C levels. In the A levels, it may be an indication of guessing where they could have been randomly picking. However, A- level results will be discussed in detail in the next section and reasons why the spread of their responses will be provided in section 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 of this chapter. The C levels' range of results may be indicative of their sensitivity to the range of responses (i.e. higher proficiency); these levels' responses will be discussed as well in the following sections.

The preferences of the B levels and NN are less spread out in that their answers seemed to congregate around the central meanings; there is a big differential (>10%) between the central meanings and the 3rd meaning, while for the A and C levels (and NS) the differential is less than 10%. The B levels may be lacking proficiency, as predicted by Ijaz (1986), where the lack of agreement shows the lack of perception of the meanings of

the diminutive. For the NN levels, where we see time and time again that they performed in a less native-like manner than the C levels, and a section discussing such performance will be provided in the following sections.

4.2 As proficiency levels increase, are learners more accurate in their interpretation of the diminutive when selecting meanings?

In the next table for each word I will indicate whether the level was native-like with a √ symbol or non-native-like with an X symbol.

Table 4.17

Meaning accuracy in L2 speakers

Word	A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	NN
Mamacita	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	√
Casita	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Patroncito	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Feito	√	X	√	X	√	X	X	√	√
Hombrecito	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
Porfavorcito	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	X
Crecidito	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pobrecita	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Padrecito	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
Chistosito	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Noviecita	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lluviecita	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cochecito	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
Ahorita	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	√	X
Indito	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	√

4.2.1 A Levels

Overall A levels are not very native-like in their responses with the exception of A1, the least proficient level, which showed to be more native-like than the other A and B levels. A1 showed more accuracy than A2 and A3 in terms like *padrecito*, where A1 and C2 were the only levels that got the right meaning selection.

4.2.1.1 A1 Beginner level

This level showed the highest percentage for the meaning [affection], which corresponds to the NS's top meaning. 24% of the A1 participants showed in general a preference to ascribe an affectionate meaning to terms with the diminutive. Even though the meaning of [affection] was not individually the top meaning in each term it was usually the second top meaning in every case and thus high numbers resulted when looking at the general findings. This level showed the second highest percentage with the meaning of [smallness]; therefore this beginning level had the two central meanings as the preferred ones, as predicted by Ijaz (1986).

This level did show a preference for the central meanings and the preferred peripheral meaning after the central ones was the second highest meaning for the NS ([superlative]). This shows somewhat surprising results for such a peripheral meaning in the lowest level of proficiency where the accuracy in meaning selection as a whole was not low. Looking at the accuracy table, we observe that this level had five terms where the selection of the majority of the participants was accurate (native-like). This is a good number considering that it was 1/3 of the terms offered and was also the same number that the advanced levels C1 and NN had.

This group showed a wide range of meanings and the accuracy on the meanings ascribed was one of the highest among the L2 groups. The 'guessing' that A1 showed at first glance can be interpreted more thoroughly not as a 'good guess' from the A1 but as an uninfluenced linguistic instinct that this group showed. The unlearned Spanish experience that A1 possesses worked to their advantage when it came to ascribing meaning to a polysemous suffix. In other words, I suggest that the lack of knowledge of language is beneficial for the conceptual transfer of this polysemous suffix. Instead of the acquisition of a polysemous item in the L2, I argue for the already existent underlying repertoire of the diminutive-related meanings in L2 speakers. Therefore unlearned participants possess a fuller range of meanings related to [smallness], as such range of meanings has not yet been refined through instruction or exposure. The transfer of conceptualizations related to [smallness] works to the advantage of A1 when it came to the variety of meaning.

4.2.2 B Levels

B levels are not very native-like in their responses as these groups show low accuracy in the meaning selection. The three levels in the B group showed a big differential percentage between the two central meanings and the third meaning. This concentration of percentages showed the low sensitivity to the various meanings of the diminutive. The third peripheral meaning selected was for B1 and B2 [softener], which corresponds to the lower levels' choice, and for B3 it was [superlative], which corresponded to the higher levels' third choice. We see proficiency being a factor in the perception of meaning for these levels.

4.2.3 C Levels

C levels' responses are more native-like, as expected because they have higher proficiency. These levels showed the greatest number of accurate meanings per term. C2 was by far the most accurate group of all and thus meanings for terms such as *hombrecito*, *por favorcito*, *padrecito* and *cochecito,* which were harder terms, were accurately chosen by these levels.

4.2.4 NN level

This level has more advanced proficiency than the C2 level, since participants of this group are no longer students of Spanish as an L2 anymore but their mastery and experience with the L2, as seen in the amount of contact with NS that they answered in the language questionnaire, has been more prolonged throughout years than the rest of the L2 levels. For this reason this group is considered as having their near-native proficiency.

This group's first and second choices were the same as the rest of the L2 groups, where [affection] had 24% and [smallness] had 21% of the participants' responses. Similar to C2, this group opted for [superlative] as the next high-rated meaning with 11% of the responses; the drop between 21% and 11% is quite considerable, similar to the rest of the L2 groups where the concentration of responses was on the two central meanings. Considering the high proficiency shown by these participants, it is surprising that 4% of the participants found the [don't know] option more suitable than any other option. However, this group was the only group (including the NS group) who had a 0% for the [distractor] meaning (Table 4.16); such meaning was included in the test as an obvious wrong option, which all groups, although with very small percentages, chose. The NN

level of Spanish of this group was not reflected by the responses given in the test as they resemble more those of lower levels and less to the NS's.

The accuracy in meaning selection for this group was lower than the C levels and than A1; the total number of meanings selected with accurate results was four. The surprising results suggest that NN speakers' accuracy was inferior to lower levels; however a possible reason could be an overly cautious attitude when assigning meaning. The NN group interviewed was a highly-educated group. The eight people in this group not only had a tremendous knowledge of the Spanish language but their profession involved the teaching of it. The eight individuals in the NN level showed an impressive variety of contact with Spanish, from a participant with a minimum of one year of instructional experience and twenty years of living in a Spanish speaking country to an individual with six years of instructional experience and twenty years of committed contact with the language as a professor of Spanish literature and cultural studies. Participants in this level were either university professors who had a vast understanding of the Spanish language and culture or instructors of undergraduate courses of Spanish at a university. Therefore, a plateau phenomenon is unlikely to be responsible for such results, since a constant search for knowledge in the subject of Spanish is assumed from this type of L2 speakers. A conscious effort to learn new meanings and to master the L2 is what is assumed from these L2 speakers whose profession is the instruction of this language.

Over-correction is a possibility where the conscious effort for correctness might have posed an obstacle for natural un-monitored responses. Although this possibility seems a bit simplistic for such group with such mastery of the language, instead I argue

for a more specific type of conscious effort to answer correctly based on the translations provided. The vast contact with Spanish that the NN participants have had is indeed the highest in the study; however their answers did not show the more native-like results, as the NN's caution showed a self-perceived authority in the language that did not allow the participants to use the diminutive as an expressive device to show more than just [smallness] or [affection]. The knowledge of the central meanings as the underlying meanings of the diminutive established either a safe selection or perhaps a prescriptive attitude when NN ascribed meaning to the suffixed terms. Therefore, it is observed that the NN group was the only group that showed [smallness] as their number one meaning for more terms than any other group. C2, like the rest of the L2 groups, showed [affection] as the most frequent number one meaning in most terms. Thus, the only group who did not have [affection] as the number one answer for the majority of the terms given was the NN group.

4.2.5 Summary

With the exception of the A1 group the lower levels behaved with an expected lower accuracy than the higher levels in C and NN. All levels showed the two central meanings as the top two meanings. The B levels showed more accuracy than the beginner levels and less accuracy that the C levels and NN. Except level A1, as proficiency levels increase learners were more accurate in their meaning ascription, which corresponds to a U-shaped curve (Kellerman, 1984) where the results of the lowest level are comparable to the results of the highest levels. A U-shaped development curve is apparent in meaning accuracy; such a curve is characterized by three stages. The first stage shows error free performance in some limited linguistic domain, the second stage is characterized by

deviant performance from the norm and stage three returns to the error free performance of stage one (Kellerman, 1984). In table 4.17 we observe that A1 was more accurate than the more advanced stages, where a drop in meaning accuracy is evident in A2, A3, and the B levels. Progressively the C levels and the NN start to show a return to the accuracy shown in A1. This concept of the U-shape shows an apparent decrease in knowledge which is explained by the possible absence of other linguistic forms presented in the earliest stage, which are consequently presented in more advanced stages. The lack of overwhelming input in the early stage results in error free performance that shows immediate decrease followed then by a return to the correct forms once in the most advanced levels. Such a pattern is shown in this study for accuracy in meaning. Further research on the accuracy of A1 is needed taking into account the U-shape concept. According to Kellerman (1984), the role of instruction seems responsible for the forms exposed to L2 learners and the phases that learners go through in the U-shape. A closer look to the teaching of the diminutive is needed to consider the U-shape concept to be responsible for the error free responses in A1.

4.3 As proficiency levels increase do L2 learners show more native-like polysemy in their selection of meanings?

Even though a broader range of meanings was expected as the level of proficiency increased, proficiency does not seem to play a positive role in the sensitivity to polysemy, but rather a role contrary to the hypothesis, where the lowest level of proficiency, A1, showed a greater sensitivity to the range of meanings of the NS group than the higher levels of proficiency. The following table shows the number of meanings chosen by each level; the table shows numbers in bold where the L2 group coincided with the number of

meanings selected by the NS for a given term. The table shows the number of connotations picked in italics whenever the L2 speakers' numbers were higher than the NS and the underlined numbers are the ones that were lower than the NS. The last column indicates the number of meanings selected by the NS to whom all the levels are compared.

Table 4.18

Polysemy summary

Word	A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	NN	NS
Mamacita	*5*	*5*	*4*	*6*	*4*	*4*	*3*	**2**	**2**	2
Casita	**4**	**4**	*6*	**4**	**4**	3	2	2	3	4
Patroncito	*7*	5	*7*	*7*	**6**	*8*	2	3	**6**	6
Feito	6	5	*8*	**7**	6	6	3	2	4	7
Hombrecito	4	3	*6*	**5**	4	*6*	3	2	4	5
Porfavorcito	**7**	4	6	6	6	4	4	2	5	7
Crecidito	**5**	4	*6*	4	4	*6*	4	3	4	5
Pobrecito	6	4	5	6	6	4	4	3	4	7
Padrecito	6	5	4	5	5	4	3	4	4	7
Chistosito	**6**	4	*7*	4	*7*	4	3	5	4	6
Noviecita	**5**	3	4	3	2	*6*	2	2	3	5
Lluviecita	*8*	2	*8*	**7**	5	6	2	2	2	7
Cochecito	*7*	4	*7*	*7*	*7*	*7*	3	4	3	5
Ahorita	**6**	5	**6**	5	5	**6**	4	3	3	6
Indito	*6*	**5**	*6*	*6*	*6*	**5**	2	4	4	5

4.3.1 A Levels

In these levels we see that they tended to pick more meanings than the NS. A1 tended to pick the same amount or more meanings than NS, which made it the most accurate level

out of all the levels when testing polysemy. The A2 level tended to pick fewer meanings than NS, but A3 tended to pick more meanings than NS, which makes this level not native-like but nonetheless sensitive to the polysemy of the diminutive.

4.3.1.1 A1 Beginner level

One of the strong findings in the study was the amount of connotations used only by the lowest proficiency level A1. This level showed in six terms the same number of connotations that the NS had. This number was the highest number of all groups, regardless of the accurate selection of meanings; the number here indicates that this group was very flexible when ascribing meaning to the Spanish diminutive.

However, this high number in meaning selection can be viewed as a result of guessing the answer. Such a simple argument does not explain the accuracy in meaning selection comparable to the high levels C1 and NN. It is also noticeable that the percentages were not far off from what the other groups were doing. They had overall eleven meanings that were also picked by the NS as well as six terms where they chose the same number of meanings as the NS and a ranking of meanings where the top preferred meanings and the least preferred meanings were comparable to those of the NS.

Exposure to the language could be a factor that might explain the similarities to the range of connotations that NS have. One possible reason why A1 showed greater sensitivity to polysemy is if they had more contact with NS than the other levels through travel. However, looking at the background questionnaire answers, we see that this is not the case where twenty-five people out of fifty-five participants in level A1 had traveled to a Spanish-speaking country, with people spending two weeks and eight people spending one week there.

The sensitivity shown by this group to number of connotations displayed is attributed to the low proficiency itself, where even though the connotations picked by both groups somewhat differed, A1 showed more accurate polysemous activity than any other group. Therefore with respect polysemy and productivity of the suffix, this level was closer to the native-like usage than any other level. A possible reason why A1 showed greater sensitivity to the polysemy is that a lack of knowledge obliged them to guess the meaning more than any other level; however such argument is unlikely the reason behind the polysemy displayed. Given that A1 showed 'guessing' consequently their chances to make mistakes were higher, however they show to be the most native-like group in the number of meanings selected as well as high accuracy. Instead the conceptual transfer argument in the accuracy section describing A1 holds as well for polysemy where it is observed how A2 and A3 did not behave the same way, showing either too many connotations selected or too little.

4.3.1.2 A2 Beginner level

This group chose the eleven meanings chosen by the NS with different percentages but appeared to have perceived all the meanings that NS did. Overall this group showed the lowest sensitivity to the meanings of the Spanish diminutive, where only twice this group was native-like in the number of meanings selected for a given term. Aside from those two times where they were accurately picking a number of meanings similar to the NS, the rest of the times this group showed fewer meanings than the NS. Therefore this group showed a conservative selection of meanings, perhaps because they did not know or did not guess meanings. The two terms where this group chose the accurate number of

meanings selected by the NS were the two terms where other groups also had a good perception of the number of possible meanings that Spanish has.

The little difference in proficiency that these participants have over the A1 group showed a significant difference when it comes to accurate meaning selection, ranking of meanings and polysemy. They showed less accuracy and less sensitivity to polysemy than A1, which is the expected response from low levels.

4.3.1.3 A3 Beginner level

This group also showed the eleven meanings shown by NS. The full range of meanings was present but with different frequencies. The total number of times where this group chose the same number of meanings picked per term as the NS was one. Only in the *ahorita* term was this group accurate with the number of meanings chosen. However, this group, unlike the previous level A2, showed a more flexible ascription of meaning where in ten terms they picked more meanings than the NS. However, unlike A1, this group could have been guessing, as they were not very accurate in meaning selection.

4.3.2 B Levels

The B levels did not show a clear pattern in the number of meanings selected. This group sometimes picked more meanings than the NS and sometimes fewer but they also show sometimes the same number of meanings that the NS had.

4.3.2.1 B1 Intermediate level

This level picked ten out of the eleven meanings used by the NS where the meaning [sarcasm] had no participants choosing it. The total number of times when the same

number of meanings was selected by NS and B1 was four. This is not a poor result when we look at the overall picture, where this number is after A1 the highest number of times where the same number of meanings was selected by both NS and B1. However, even though this group showed native-like polysemy, the accuracy in this group was not native-like.

4.3.2.2 B2 Intermediate level

This level was accurate twice in the number of meanings chosen, which is not high overall. The rest of the terms showed mostly fewer meanings chosen that the NS group, but no clear pattern is evident. This group did pick the eleven meanings that NS picked, but the ranking was not accurate as [softener], [young] and [pity] were given a higher rank than [superlative]. The overall sensitivity to the diminutive meanings in this group was low.

4.3.2.3 B3 Intermediate level

The total number of meanings picked was nine where [sarcasm] and [approximation] were not chosen by participants. When looking at Table 4.19 we observe how this group had for two terms the same number of meanings chosen by NS. This group did not have as many terms with the same number of meanings as NS, and they picked more meanings than the NS for six terms and for seven terms they picked fewer meanings than NS. This group showed little accuracy in meaning selection and range of polysemy.

4.3.3 C Levels

C levels consistently picked fewer meanings than the NS. Here, advanced learners of Spanish seemed to show more caution when it came to choosing translations, as their answers showed a lot of consistency and conservativeness, limiting the usage to core meanings in every case. Therefore, although the meanings are more native-like than most levels, they lacked the native -like polysemy activity.

4.3.3.1 C1 Advanced level

Even though the meanings selected were more accurate than most levels, when it came to polysemy this level did not on any occasion have the same number of meanings than NS. For fourteen of the fifteen terms they chose fewer meanings than the NS.

4.3.3.2 C2 Advanced level

There was only one term where this group coincided in number with the NS. The rest of the terms showed fewer meanings chosen than NS. However, the eleven meanings picked by NS were also picked by C2 in the overall results, which suggests that this group was as a whole more accurate in the main meaning of each term.

4.3.4 NN

Only twice did this group have the same number of meanings chosen as the NS. This level, like the C levels, also showed fewer numbers of connotations picked than the NS for the remaining thirteen terms. A total of nine meanings were chosen by this group.

One possible reason why the NN group showed lower polysemy was because they were metalinguistically aware and therefore were being very conservative in their responses and not entertaining all the possibilities because they were trying to "please" the researcher by giving the response they thought the researcher wanted. Their awareness inhibited the possibility of spontaneous responses and thus very limited variation in meaning was shown.

4.3.5 Summary

As proficiency levels increase there was no increase in accuracy for polysemy. The responses of the A1 group showed to be the most accurate. The rest of the beginner levels A2 and A3, showed more meanings than the NS .The B levels did not show a clear pattern as sometimes they had the same amount of meanings chosen as the NS; however sometimes they had fewer or more meanings than the NS. The C levels and NN clearly showed fewer meanings than the NS, where only once C2 chose the same amount than the NS and NN twice selected the same amount.

4.4 Limitations of the study and directions for future research

4.4.1 Participants

4.4.1.1 NS

The NS group to whom the test was given had eighteen out of 38 native speakers from Mexico and the rest were from different Spanish-speaking countries. Considering that the diminutive is an expressive suffix in Mexican Spanish, the testing of a large group of people who typically use the suffix productively does not provide an ideal representation

of the Spanish language. Therefore, taking into consideration this factor, the test was designed to target Mexican Spanish, as we can see in some of the phrases provided where the answers were expected to elicit a certain answer among the Mexican participants. However, the varieties of Spanish in the rest of the participants provided additional information with respect the productivity of this Spanish suffix. In this manner, the results for the NS did not show a significant distinction in the perception of meanings due to the region of origin. The results were quite mixed and the differences in perception of meaning were evident among the Mexican group as well. Nonetheless, a detailed study with equal numbers of members from different Spanish-speaking countries would offer an optimal account for the meaning differences among different dialects of Spanish.

4.4.1.2 Near natives and C2

Due to the lack of proficient participants, the study had no option but base its findings on percentages found for eight participants for NN and six for C2. It turned out that NN and C2 are more difficult to find in university than lower levels of proficiency as the enrollment to beginners' classes is constantly larger than that of more advanced levels.

The high number of years of contact with Spanish and the variety of the nature of the contact that the NN and the C2 groups showed made their proficiency a complex learning process to track. They are thus a highly heterogeneous group, more heterogeneous than the other levels. As mentioned above, the high education that all eight NN had may have been problematic for the study, as the NN were conservative in their answers, perhaps due to a concern for what is "correct". Future studies would need to consider NN who are not highly educated or metalinguistically aware. In addition,

small number of participants in the NN group and in the C2 group have a bigger effect on the percentages than the larger groups.

4.4.2 Test

Due to restrictions of time the test was designed to verify as many meanings as possible with the smallest number of sentences possible. The participants in the test were mainly undergraduate students of the university who were asked for their participation during class time. The burden of answering an extensive test is always something to pay attention to when creating a test; in this way the test could not provide all the meanings I wanted to evaluate. The categories needed to include as many meanings as possible in the test, thus phrases containing contexts where NS would chose certain meanings were created. The tests did not offer fully the opportunity to test all the meanings. Even though a satisfactory number of meanings were selected by both NS and L2 speakers, the objective was to deliver examples of all the usages of all the meanings and thus restrictions of time and length of test did not allow for a more extensive evaluation.

The design of a more inclusive test with more suitable contexts for meanings that showed low responses in NS would be needed. The test provided for this study could not successfully test the peripheral meanings of [SDT] and [approximation]. Thus, the sentences provided did not trigger in NS responses for these meanings.

The nature of the test only looked at the interpretation of the diminutive but not the production of it. The data do not give any information on the acquisition of the diminutive. Very different results can be observed when participants make a conscious effort to interpret the meaning of the diminutive once provided with an artificial context for it, as opposed to a production test where acquisition can be tested. The artificial

context provided was in the form of isolated sentences that do not resemble natural speech, which always comes in a real context.

Although the participants had the choice of selecting as many meanings as they wanted with a numerical order of 'one' and 'two' to indicate the hierarchy of their selection, only very few provided a numbered hierarchy with the meanings selected. For such reason only the top answers were taken into account in the analysis of the data.

4.4.3 Level of proficiency

Due to the complexity of determining someone's level of language proficiency, the self-assessment test was not sufficient as an instrument to measure proficiency. This study bases its results under the assumption that the self-assessment grid was accurate in the classification of levels of proficiency. Individuals tested in this study self-evaluated their language skills and determined their levels of proficiency, which does not necessarily reflect the actual level. Participants can self-perceive their skills as higher or lower, thus additional proficiency measures would be necessary in further research to reevaluate the results claimed to pertain to particular levels.

4.4.4 Perception vs. acquisition

The thesis presented here only investigated the perception of the polysemous diminutive and not its acquisition. Because of the nature of the test, the analyzed data provides information only on the perception and not on the acquisition of the suffix. The production of the diminutive instead of the interpretation of given meanings would have reflected acquired meanings of the diminutive. The interpretation of the provided terms with the meaning choices stimulated the connection to the L1 and thus positive transfer

was reflected as associations with the concept of smallness were made. It is clear, though, that this study does not provide information about the acquisition of the diminutive but about meaning perceptions.

4.5 Implications for teaching

The presented work here proposes the teaching of vocabulary expansion through the exploitation of polysemous items already learnt or already in the L1 mental inventory of an L2 learner. An economy of memorization will result in motivating a quick production of already existent extensions that can be applied immediately to language production. Given in this case that the associations related to [smallness] appear to be correspond in L1 and in L2, learners of a L2 can be encouraged to induce meaning, which would be a fairly easy task as the similarities of the extensions are already there, as can be observed at an early level. If a focus on language instruction creates the awareness of the connection of the meanings associated to one simple word it would give the L2 speaker immediate assurance of a list of meanings ready to use. With less memory space used, a link from the L1 to the L2 underlying inventories could be established to the benefit of economy of memorization. The utilization of polysemous items to teach vocabulary can result in a means to produce in an inductive manner meaning already stored in mental inventories of L1. Both native speakers and early stages of L2 showed expressiveness through the use of [smallness], which suggests as well an eagerness to convey meaning and to produce it.

New words do not necessarily mean new concepts and so the teaching of basic common concepts is frequently present as part of the beginner syllabus. The teaching of the diminutive was found to a minimal extent in three textbooks. It was found that two

textbooks for a beginner Spanish course, *Dímelo Tú* (Samaniego et al, 2001) and *Arriba* (Zayas-Bazan et al, 2003), showed either no traces of the Spanish diminutive at all or a small box in the last lesson of *Dímelo Tú*, presented it as a Mexican Spanish literary device. In an intermediate-level textbook *Conexiones* (Zayas-Bazán et al, 2001), there was a more extensive section for the suffix, although the meaning explanation briefly presents the meanings of both the augmentative and the diminutive together and three meanings are provided for both suffixes: smallness, endearment and contempt, and it was not specified which belongs to which. The focus here is on the formation of the diminutive in terms of orthographic rules, as it is what is tested in the provided exercise. Another book used by the advanced level where the topic is the comparison between English and Spanish contains a whole section on affixes which mentions the diminutive briefly and instead of making use of the positive comparison of the meaning associations between Spanish and English, it points out the non-productive diminutive affix in English (Whitley, 2002).

The transfer of meaning repertoires shared by underlying universal concepts is worthwhile to exploit in teaching. The expressiveness of the suffix and the productivity of it in the real language use of NS makes the teaching of the suffix an underrated important means of expression itself.

The Spanish diminutive has cultural implications as its expressiveness can be used as a means to teach culture in the L2 classroom. The teaching of the several uses and interpretations of the diminutive can be beneficial for the early stages of proficiency but nonetheless for the highest levels as well as their awareness of the polysemy status of this suffix appears to be very low.

4.6 Conclusion

This study examined the perceptions of the diminutive by L2 learners of Spanish, a topic that has not been studied previously despite the productiveness of the diminutive in Spanish. I found that as the proficiency level increased, learners were more native-like in the meanings they associated with the diminutive, while less proficient learners tended to favour the central meanings of the diminutive. The study also found that L2 learners of very low proficiency (A1) showed a possible positive conceptual transfer and that possible overcorrection in very proficient individuals (NN) inhibited accuracy in the expressiveness of this polysemous suffix.

The question of the correlation of proficiency with accuracy is one that could be further refined into an issue of expressiveness and not accuracy per se. In this manner it was found that the expressiveness of the diminutive decreased for the highest levels as polysemy was low. The high proficiency in this group might have inhibited the transfer from the English associations with the concept of diminutive. The more proficient the group is the less transfer is shown as participants are capable of shutting down their L1. Once speakers do not use the L1 as a means to understand the L2, speakers then are left with a narrower language than that of the NS's. Therefore the vast proficiency acquired in the L2 leads to the avoidance of a positive conceptual transfer where the high knowledge is not only insufficient but counterproductive for making meaning chains of associations in languages with similar meaning inventories. We have to consider as well that NN could have also intentionally suppressed the transfer because of their metalinguistic awareness and prescriptive attitudes that resulted in non- spontaneous responses being given. These findings suggest that greater attention needs to be given to

the range of meanings of the diminutive in classroom teaching in light of the expressiveness of the diminutive in Spanish.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Background Questionnaire

Language history

Sex _____

What is your mother tongue? _____

Age _____

What languages do you speak with your immediate and/or extended family?

_____

Have you taken Spanish before? _____

University ☐ Yes ☐ No _____semesters _____level

High school ☐ Yes ☐ No _____semesters _____level

Elementary ☐ Yes ☐ No _____ semesters _____level

Have you ever traveled to a Spanish speaking country? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Where? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Rate yourself in that language:

Language _____	Language _____	Language _____
Writing 1 2 3 4 5	Writing 1 2 3 4 5	Writing 1 2 3 4 5
Reading 1 2 3 4 5	Reading 1 2 3 4 5	Reading 1 2 3 4 5
Speaking 1 2 3 4 5	Speaking 1 2 3 4 5	Speaking 1 2 3 4 5
Listening 1 2 3 4 5	Listening 1 2 3 4 5	Listening 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix B

Test for learners of Spanish as a Second Language

Select from the list below the English phrase that is the **best** translation of the underlined Spanish word and mark it with a **1**. Indicate **all** the **other possible** translations with a **2**. You may choose more than one "possible" translation. If you are unsure about how to translate the Spanish meaning, check off the "I don't know response".

Please write **any other** translations on the line provided.

1. Dónde está tu **noviecita**? *Where is your girlfriend?*
___ Young girlfriend
___ Insignificant girlfriend
___ Mean girlfriend
___ Pitiful girlfriend
___ Small girlfriend
___ Voluptuous girlfriend
___ Respectable girlfriend
___ Cute girlfriend
___ Interesting girlfriend
___ I don't know
other_____

2. ¿Dónde está el **padrecito**? *Where is the priest?*
____ Cute priest
___ Respectable priest
____ Unimportant priest
___ Stupid priest
___ Pitiful priest
___ Big priest
___ Little priest
___ Respectable priest
___ Funny priest
___ I don't know
other_____

3. La **casita** es roja. *The house is red.*
___ New house
___ Cute house
___ Small house
___ Ugly house
___ Pitiful house
___ Big house
___ Respectable house
___ Unimportant house
___ Green house
___ I don't know
other_____

4. El cadillac es un **cochecito** caro. *The cadillac is an expensive car.*
___ Fast car
___ Ugly car
___ Small car
___ Lovely car
___Cheap car
___ Pitiful car
___ Big car
___ Stupid car
___ New car
___ Respectable car
___ I don't know
other _____

5 La **lluviecita** duró ocho horas. *The rain lasted eight hours.*
___Lovely rain
___Stupid rain
___ Pitiful rain
___Light rain
___Small rain
___Non stop rain
___Long rain
___ Short rain
___Respectable rain
___Cold rain
___ I don't know
other _____

6. Ese **hombrecito**, no tiene valor para pelear. *That man has no guts to fight.*
___Nice man
___Insignificant man
___ Pitiful man
___Small man
___Big man
___Respectable man
___ Jealous man
___ I don't know
other _____

7. **Mamacita,** estás buena. *Mom you are good*
___Small mom
___Nice mom
___ Insignificant mom
___Pitiful mom
___ Voluptuous mom
___ Respectable mom
___ Tired mom
___ I don't know
other _____

8. El niño está **feito**. *The kid is ugly.*
___ Ugly and endearing
___ Ugly and little
___ A little ugly
___ Ugly and insignificant
___ Very ugly
___ Pretty
___ Ugly and respectable
___ Sick
___ Ugly and pitiful
___ I don't know
other _____

9. **Pobrecita** niña. *Poor girl.*
___ Poor and endearing
___ Very poor
___ A little poor
___ Poor and pitiful
___ Rich
___ Poor and respectable
___ Interesting
___ Poor and little
___ I don't know
other _____

10. **Ahorita** te hablo por teléfono. *I'll call you now on the phone.*
___ Right now
___ Now (affectionate)
___ In a second (apologetic)
___ In a second
___ Right now (rude)
___ In a while
___ Never
___ Yesterday
___ I don't know
other _____

11. Por **favorcito** dame un pedazo de pan. *Please give me a piece of bread.*
___ Please (a little favor)
___ Please (affectionate)
___ Please (demanding)
___ Please (apologetic)
___ Please (respectful)
___ Please (very polite)
___ Please (funny)
___ I don't know
other _____

12. Eres muy **chistosito**. *You are very funny.*
___ Funny and little

___Funny and endearing
___ A little funny
___Funny and pitiful
___Very funny
___Not funny at all
___ Annoying
___Funny and respectful
___Jealous
___ I don't know
other _____

13. Los **inditos** mexicanos venden dulces. *The Mexican Indians sell candy.*
___Small Indians
___Young Indians
___Lovely Indians
___Stupid Indians
___Pitiful Indians
___Respectable Indians
___ Jealous Indians
___ I don't know
other _____

14. El niño está **crecidito**. *The kid has grown.*
___ Developed and endearing
___Developed and stupid
___ Small
___ Developed and pitiful
___ Very developed
___Very small
___Sick
___Developed and young
___ I don't know
other_____

15. Mi **patroncito** me mandó a comprar el periódico. *My boss sent me to buy the paper.*
___Nice boss
___Married boss
___Weak boss
___Poor boss
___Pitiful boss
___Big boss
___Respectable boss
___Small boss
___Young boss
___I don't know
other_____

Are you willing to explain your answers in an oral interview (5-10mins)? ☐Yes ☐No
e-mail address_____

Appendix C

Meanings associated with translations provided in test

Noviecita

A	B
Young	Young girlfriend
Diminution of value (derogatory)	Insignificant girlfriend
Diminution (depreciation)	Mean girlfriend
Pity	Pitiful girlfriend
Small	Small girlfriend
Superlative	Voluptuous girlfriend
Respect	Respectable girlfriend
Affection	Cute girlfriend

Padrecito

A	B
Affection	
Respect	
Diminution (lack of worth)	Unimportant
Diminution (depreciation)	Stupid
Pity	Pitiful
Superlative	Big
Small	Little

Casita

A	B
Young	New house
Affection	Cute house
Small	Small house
Diminution (depreciation)	Ugly house
Pity	Pitiful house
Superlative	Big house
Respect	Respectable house
Diminution (lack of worth)	Unimportant house

Cochecito

A	B
Diminution	Ugly car
Size	Small car
Affection	Lovely car
Sarcasm	Cheap car
Pity	Pitiful car
Superlative	Big car
Diminution	Stupid car
Young	New car
Respect	Respectable car

Lluviecita

A	B
Affection	Lovely rain
Diminution	Stupid rain
Pity	Pitiful rain
Softener (Reduction in strength)	Light rain
Size	Small rain
Approximative	Non stop rain
Superlative	Long rain
Softener (Short duration of time)	Short rain
Respect	Respectable rain

Hombrecito

A	B
Affection	Nice man
Diminution	Insignificant man
Pity	Pitiful man
Size	Small man
Superlative	Big man
Respect	Respectable man

Mamacita

A	B
Size	Small mom
Affection	Nice mom
Diminution	Insignificant mom
Pity	Pitiful mom
Superlative	Voluptuous mom
Respect	Respectable mom

Feito

A	B
Affectionate	Ugly and endearing
Size	Ugly and little
Softener	A little ugly
Diminution (lack of worth)	Ugly and insignificant
Superlative	Very ugly
Sarcastic	Pretty
Respect	Ugly and respectable
Pity	Ugly and pitiful

Pobrecita

A	B
Affectionate	Poor and endearing
Superlative	Very poor
Softener	A little poor
Pity	Poor and pitiful
Sarcastic	Rich
Respect	Poor and respectable
Size	Poor and little

Ahorita

A	B
Superlative	Right now
Affectionate	Now (affectionate)
Softener	In a second (apologetic)
Approximation	In a second
Diminution	Right now (rude)
Sarcastic	In a while
Sarcastic	Never

Por favorcito

A	B
Size	Please (a little favor)
Affectionate	Please (affectionate)
Diminution	Please (demanding)
Softener	Please (apologetic)
Respect	Please (respectful)
Intensifier	Please (very polite)

Chistosito

A	B
Size	Funny and little
Affectionate	Funny and endearing
Softener	A little funny
Pity	Funny and pitiful
Intensifier	Very funny
Sarcastic	Not funny at all
Diminution	Annoying
Respect	Funny and respectful

Inditos

A	B
Size	Small Indians
Young	Young Indians
Affectionate	Lovely Indians
Diminution	Stupid Indians
Pity	Pitiful Indians
Respect	Respectable Indians

Crecidito

A	B
Affection	Developed and endearing
Diminution	Developed and stupid
Size	Small
Pity	Developed and pitiful
Superlative	Very developed
Sarcasm	Very small
young	Developed and young

Patroncito

A	B
Affection and softener	Nice boss
Diminution	Weak boss
Pity	Poor boss
Pity	Pitiful boss
Superlative	Big boss
Respect	Respectable boss
Small	Small boss
Young	Young boss

Appendix D

Test for English Monolingual Speakers

Select from the list below the phrase that is the best interpretation of the underlined word and mark it with a **1**. Indicate other possible interpretation with a **2**. You may choose more than one "possible" interpretations. If you are unsure about how to interpret the word, check off the "I don't know response".

Please write **any other** interpretation on the line provided.

5. *Where is your little girlfriend?*

___Small girlfriend
___Big girlfriend
___Mean girlfriend
___Cute girlfriend
___Affectionate girlfriend
___Insignificant girlfriend
___ Voluptuous girlfriend
___ Young girlfriend
___ Respectable girlfriend
___ Interesting girlfriend
___ I don't know
other_____

6. *Where is the little priest?*

___small priest
___Big priest
___Mean priest
___Cute priest
___Respectable priest
___Affectionate priest
___Stupid priest
___Funny priest
___I don't know
other_____

7. *The little house is red.*

___Small house
___New house
___Cute house
___Big house
___ Ugly house
___Cheap house
___ Respectable house
___ Sweet house
___ Poor house (with sympathy)
___ Green house
___ I don't know
other_____

8. *The cadillac is an expensive little car.*

___Big car
___Small car
___New car
___Cheap car
___Ugly car
___Stupid car
___Respectable car
___Cute car
___Funny car
___Fast car
___I don't know
other _____

6 *The little rain lasted eight hours.*

___Small rain
___Long rain
___Stupid rain
___Lovely rain
___Non stop rain
___Respectable rain
___Nice rain
___Cold rain
___ I don't know
other _____

7 *That little man has no guts to fight.*

___Small man
___Big man
___Stupid man
___Nice man
___Weak man
___Cowardly man
___Respectable man
___Insignificant man
___ Jealous man
___ I don't know
other _____

8 *Little mama you are good*

___Small mom
___Big mom
___Mean mom
___Cute mom
___Affectionate mom
___Insignificant mom
___ Voluptuous mom
___ Young mom
___ Respectable mom
___ Tired mom
___ I don't know
other _____

8. *The little kid is ugly.*

___ Ugly and little
___ A little ugly
___Very ugly
___Ugly and endearing
___ Ugly and mean
___ Pretty
___Sick
___ I don't know
other _____

9. *Poor little girl.*

___Poor and little
___A little poor
___Very poor
___Poor and endearing
___Poor and mean
___Poor thing
___ Rich
___ Lucky
___ Interesting
___ I don't know
other _____

10. *The little Indians sell candy.*

___Small Indians
___Young Indians
___Lovely Indians
___Stupid Indians
___Respectable Indians
___Poor Indians
___ Smart Indians
___ Jealous Indians
___ I don't know
other _____

11 *My little boss sent me to buy the paper.*

___Small boss
___Young boss
___Nice boss
___Weak boss
___Poor boss
___Big boss
___Respectable boss
___Young boss
___ Attractive boss
___Married boss
___ I don't know
other_____

12. *Shorty, would you give me a glass of milk?*

__Small person
__Short person
__ Tall person
__ short person (rudely)
__ Short person (affectionately)
__ Short person (respectfully)
__ I don't know
other _____

Appendix E

Summary of results in percentages

Noviecita

	Smallness	young	affection	softener	pity	DOV	respect	don't know	distractor
A1	45.5	0.0	34.5	0.0	0.0	1.8	1.8	14.5	1.8
A2	22.2	11.1	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
A3	63.5	0.0	19.2	0.0	0.0	1.9	3.8	11.5	0.0
B1	40.4	0.0	51.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.4	2.1
B2	28.6	0.0	71.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
B3	40.6	0.0	37.5	0.0	6.3	3.1	6.3	3.1	3.1
C1	33.3	0.0	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
C2	33.3	0.0	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NN	44.4	0.0	44.4	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
NS	9.3	7.0	32.6	0.0	4.7	46.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
MES	21.4	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	28.6	0.0	0.0	0.0

Padrecito

	Smallness	young	affection	pity	DOV	super-lative	respect	don't know	distractor
A1	18.5	0.0	7.4	1.9	9.3	0.0	40.7	20.4	1.9
A2	30.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
A3	32.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.0	3.8	24.5	22.6	0.0
B1	41.7	0.0	6.3	0.0	6.3	0.0	27.1	10.4	8.3
B2	39.3	0.0	7.1	0.0	14.3	0.0	32.1	0.0	7.1
B3	48.1	0.0	11.1	3.7	0.0	0.0	25.9	11.1	0.0
C1	33.3	0.0	33.3	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
C2	16.7	0.0	16.7	0.0	16.7	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
NN	33.3	0.0	16.7	8.3	33.3	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0
NS	7.3	2.4	29.3	2.4	2.4	0.0	51.2	0.0	4.9
MES	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.4

Casita

	Smallness	young/ new	affection	pity	DOV	super-lative	respect	don't know	distractor
A1	48.1	9.3	27.8	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	13.0	0.0
A2	50.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
A3	60.4	9.4	7.5	0.0	3.8	3.8	3.8	11.3	0.0
B1	72.9	2.1	20.8	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0
B2	57.1	10.7	28.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6
B3	74.1	7.4	18.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
C1	66.7	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
C2	83.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NN	77.8	11.1	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NS	77.5	0.0	17.5	2.5	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
MES	76.9	0.0	23.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Cochecito

	Smallness	young/ new	affection	pity	DOV	super- lative	respect	don't know	distractor
A1	9.1	10.9	14.5	0.0	3.6	21.8	18.2	18.2	3.6
A2	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0	20.0	10.0
A3	30.2	9.4	17.0	0.0	3.8	13.2	3.8	15.1	7.5
B1	28.0	6.0	26.0	0.0	6.0	6.0	12.0	14.0	2.0
B2	32.1	3.6	42.9	0.0	3.6	7.1	3.6	3.6	3.6
B3	21.4	10.7	39.3	0.0	7.1	3.6	7.1	7.1	3.6
C1	16.7	0.0	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7
C2	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	14.3	42.9	14.3	14.3
NN	50.0	0.0	37.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0
NS	16.7	0.0	21.4	2.4	4.8	23.8	28.6	2.4	0.0
MES	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	42.9	35.7	7.1	0.0

Lluviecita

	Small- ness	affect- ion	soften- er RS	SDT	pity	DOV	Approx imation	super- lative	respect	don't know	distr actor
A1	5.6	9.3	33.3	1.9	1.9	1.9	13.0	11.1	0.0	22.2	0.0
A2	10.0	0.0	70.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0
A3	1.8	5.5	43.6	0.0	1.8	5.5	7.3	14.5	0.0	18.2	1.8
B1	5.5	14.5	56.4	5.5	0.0	1.8	3.6	1.8	0.0	10.9	0.0
B2	7.1	10.7	75.0	3.6	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
B3	6.7	10.0	70.0	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.3	0.0
C1	0.0	33.3	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0
C2	0.0	0.0	66.7	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NN	0.0	0.0	85.7	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NS	0.0	2.4	34.1	2.4	0.0	41.5	14.6	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.4
MES	7.1	35.7	42.9	7.1	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Hombrecito

	Small- ness	young	affection	pity	DOV	superlative	respect	don't know
A1	27.3	0.0	0.0	43.6	10.9	3.6	0.0	14.5
A2	50.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
A3	27.3	0.0	10.9	32.7	14.5	3.6	1.8	9.1
B1	45.8	0.0	6.3	27.1	12.5	0.0	2.1	6.3
B2	17.9	0.0	10.7	53.6	14.3	0.0	0.0	3.6
B3	35.5	0.0	3.2	38.7	12.9	6.5	3.2	0.0
C1	16.7	0.0	0.0	66.7	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
C2	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
NN	10.0	10.0	0.0	50.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NS	9.3	2.3	0.0	23.3	62.8	2.3	0.0	0.0
MES	21.4	0.0	0.0	21.4	57.1	0.0	0.0	0.0

Mamacita

	Smallness	affection	pity	DOV	super lative	respect	don't know	distr actor
A1	11.1	53.7	0.0	0.0	7.4	11.1	13.0	3.7
A2	10.0	50.0	0.0	10.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
A3	12.7	60.0	0.0	0.0	10.9	10.9	5.5	0.0
B1	12.0	56.0	2.0	0.0	14.0	12.0	2.0	2.0
B2	10.3	62.1	0.0	0.0	13.8	13.8	0.0	0.0
B3	20.0	43.3	0.0	0.0	20.0	16.7	0.0	0.0
C1	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	50.0	33.3	0.0	0.0
C2	0.0	66.7	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
NN	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	75.0	0.0	12.5	0.0
NS	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	85.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
MES	0.0	42.9	0.0	0.0	42.9	0.0	14.3	0.0

Feito

	Smallness	affection	soft-ener	pity	DOV	superlative	respect	don't know	distr actor
A1	17.9	14.3	26.8	7.1	8.9	16.1	0.0	8.9	0.0
A2	30.0	40.0	10.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
A3	18.5	9.3	24.1	5.6	7.4	20.4	1.9	9.3	3.7
B1	18.4	30.6	26.5	8.2	8.2	4.1	2.0	2.0	0.0
B2	28.6	14.3	35.7	10.7	3.6	3.6	0.0	3.6	0.0
B3	26.7	30.0	20.0	6.7	0.0	10.0	0.0	3.3	3.3
C1	33.3	0.0	16.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0
C2	0.0	33.3	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0
NN	10.0	20.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	10.0	0.0
NS	7.5	12.5	42.5	15.0	2.5	10.0	5.0	5.0	0.0
MES	78.6	0.0	21.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Pobrecita

	Smallness	affection	softener	pity	superlative	sarcastic	respect	don't know
A1	16.7	33.3	7.4	16.7	7.4	0.0	7.4	11.1
A2	10.0	60.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
A3	20.0	25.5	9.1	23.6	12.7	0.0	0.0	9.1
B1	14.9	48.9	12.8	8.5	6.4	0.0	2.1	6.4
B2	16.7	50.0	3.3	20.0	3.3	0.0	3.3	3.3
B3	10.0	53.3	0.0	23.3	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
C1	16.7	33.3	0.0	33.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
C2	0.0	66.7	16.7	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NN	12.5	37.5	0.0	37.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
NS	12.5	27.5	2.5	47.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
MES	21.4	21.4	0.0	57.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Ahorita

	Smallness	affection	softener	DOV	approx imation	super-lative	sarcastic	don't know
A1	0.0	23.6	12.7	5.5	7.3	29.1	5.5	16.4
A2	0.0	40.0	10.0	0.0	10.0	30.0	10.0	0.0
A3	0.0	15.5	20.7	3.4	5.2	34.5	5.2	15.5
B1	0.0	20.8	20.8	4.2	18.8	27.1	0.0	8.3
B2	0.0	21.4	21.4	3.6	17.9	28.6	0.0	7.1
B3	0.0	17.2	17.2	6.9	6.9	44.8	3.4	3.4
C1	0.0	28.6	14.3	14.3	0.0	42.9	0.0	0.0
C2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	50.0	16.7	0.0
NN	0.0	22.2	0.0	0.0	55.6	22.2	0.0	0.0
NS	0.0	21.6	21.6	2.0	13.7	25.5	15.7	0.0
MES	14.3	50.0	0.0	35.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Por favorcito

	Smallness	affection	softener	DOV	super-lative	respect	don't know	distr actor
A1	38.9	24.1	9.3	7.4	5.6	5.6	7.4	1.9
A2	50.0	30.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
A3	50.0	16.1	3.6	5.4	10.7	5.4	8.9	0.0
B1	44.9	34.7	2.0	2.0	14.3	2.0	0.0	0.0
B2	55.6	29.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	0.0	0.0
B3	64.3	17.9	0.0	0.0	7.1	10.7	0.0	0.0
C1	16.7	33.3	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	16.7	16.7
C2	33.3	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NN	25.0	25.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	12.5	12.5	0.0
NS	15.9	40.9	13.6	9.1	11.4	4.5	0.0	4.5
MES								

Chistosito

	Small-ness	affe-ction	softener	pity	DOV	superlative	sarcastic	respect	don't know
A1	5.6	42.6	7.4	1.9	0.0	27.8	3.7	0.0	11.1
A2	0.0	41.2	41.2	5.9	0.0	11.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
A3	7.5	32.1	17.0	1.9	3.8	26.4	0.0	1.9	9.4
B1	12.8	61.7	6.4	0.0	0.0	12.8	0.0	0.0	6.4
B2	6.7	60.0	6.7	3.3	0.0	16.7	3.3	3.3	0.0
B3	18.5	59.3	11.1	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
C1	0.0	50.0	16.7	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7
C2	0.0	16.7	16.7	0.0	16.7	33.3	0.0	16.7	0.0
NN	0.0	60.0	10.0	0.0	10.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NS	2.4	7.1	0.0	7.1	28.6	11.9	42.9	0.0	0.0
MES									

Inditos

	Small-ness	young	affection	pity	DOV	respect	don't know
A1	16.7	27.8	5.6	5.6	5.6	13.0	25.9
A2	20.0	20.0	0.0	20.0	10.0	10.0	20.0
A3	33.3	25.9	3.7	3.7	7.4	3.7	22.2
B1	31.3	41.7	4.2	4.2	2.1	6.3	10.4
B2	20.0	53.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	10.0	6.7
B3	21.4	60.7	10.7	3.6	0.0	3.6	0.0
C1	16.7	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7
C2	30.0	30.0	0.0	30.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
NN	30.0	30.0	0.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	10.0
NS	0.0	27.5	20.0	27.5	2.5	12.5	10.0
MES	14.3	42.9	14.3	14.3	14.3	0.0	0.0

Crecidito

	Small-ness	young	affection	pity	DOV	superlative	sarcastic	don't know
A1	1.9	18.5	46.3	1.9	0.0	14.8	0.0	16.7
A2	0.0	10.0	60.0	10.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
A3	5.8	19.2	28.8	1.9	0.0	21.2	9.6	13.5
B1	4.1	34.7	36.7	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	22.4
B2	0.0	21.4	57.1	0.0	0.0	10.7	7.1	3.6
B3	6.7	10.0	46.7	6.7	3.3	10.0	0.0	16.7
C1	16.7	16.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	16.7
C2	0.0	33.3	33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0
NN	0.0	22.2	44.4	11.1	0.0	22.2	0.0	0.0
NS	0.0	22.5	17.5	2.5	0.0	52.5	5.0	0.0
MES								

Patroncito

	Small-ness	young	affection	pity	DOV	super-lative	respect	don't know	distractor
A1	3.7	5.6	25.9	1.9	3.7	11.1	24.1	24.1	0.0
A2	0.0	20.0	30.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	20.0	10.0	0.0
A3	11.1	9.3	24.1	9.3	0.0	14.8	16.7	13.0	1.9
B1	14.6	14.6	27.1	8.3	2.1	2.1	16.7	14.6	0.0
B2	3.4	10.3	44.8	17.2	3.4	0.0	20.7	0.0	0.0
B3	9.7	19.4	38.7	12.9	6.5	3.2	6.5	0.0	3.2
C1	0.0	16.7	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0
C2	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	16.7	16.7	0.0
NN	11.1	22.2	22.2	11.1	22.2	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
NS	0.0	9.8	19.5	4.9	4.9	4.9	56.1	0.0	0.0
MES	14.3	0.0	7.1	0.0	35.7	7.1	35.7	0.0	0.0